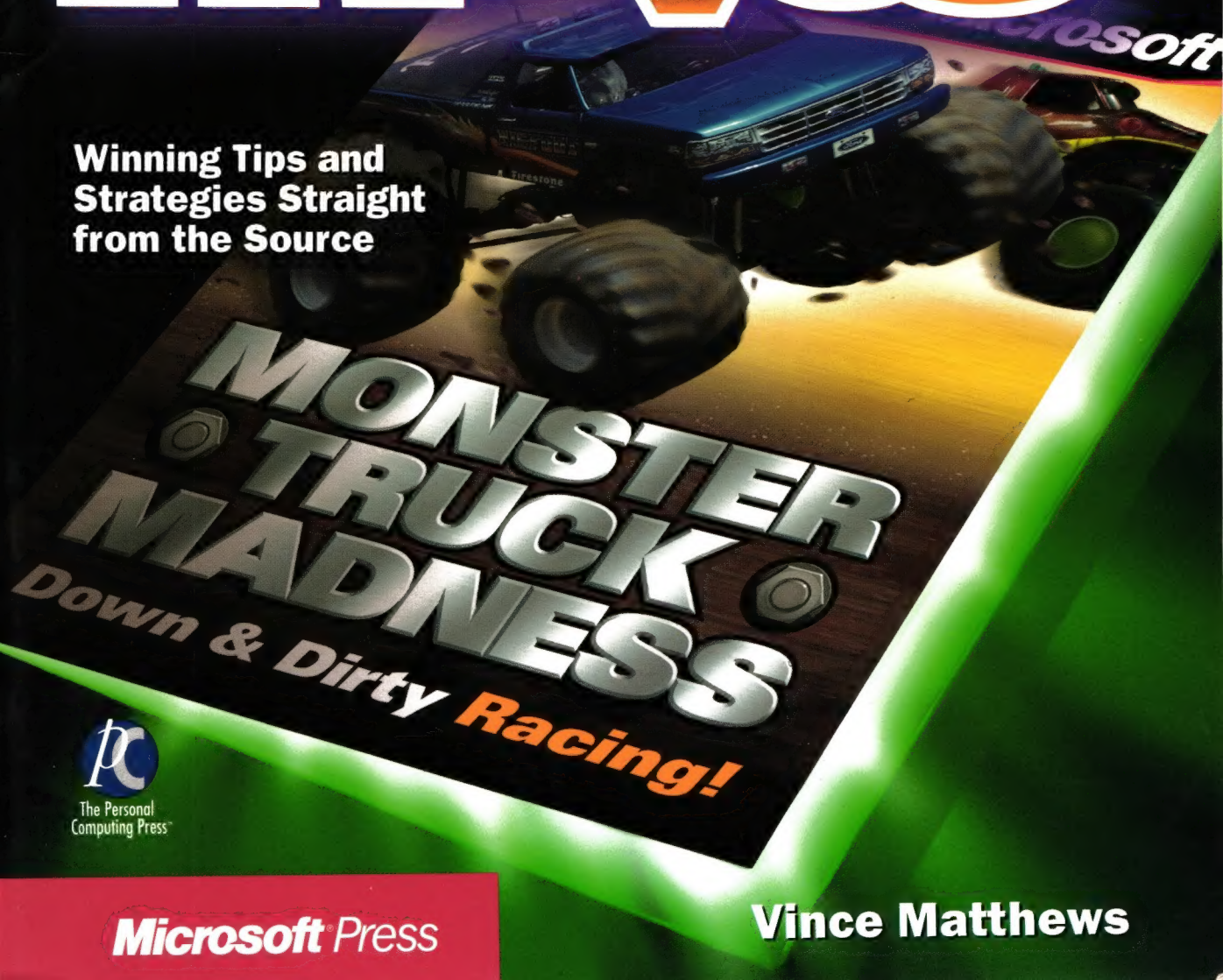
Designed for Microsoft Windows 95

Microsoft

Monster Truck Madness

inside moves



Winning Tips and Strategies Straight from the Source

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Vince Matthews

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Microsoft Press

Vince Matthews

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my father, whose wisdom,
love, and support has always guided me
along the bumpy road of life.
And, always, to my wife, Maria.

Vince Matthews

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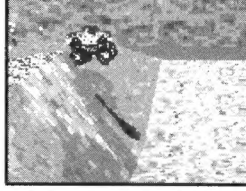
Introduction



Keep on Truckin'

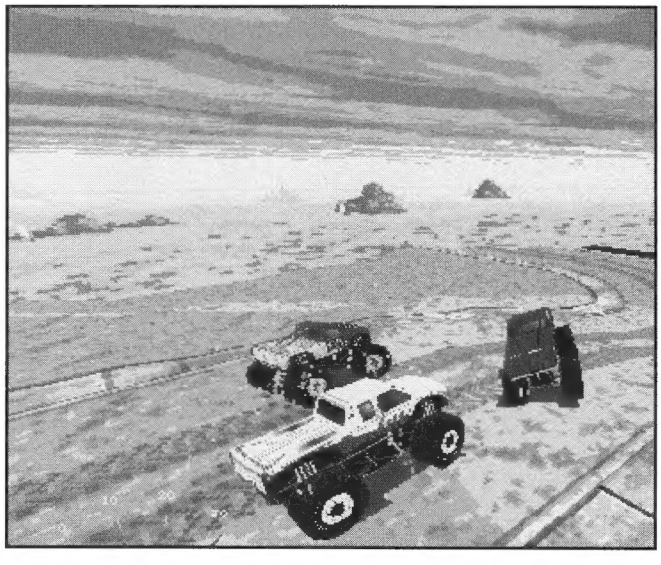
They're big, bad, and boisterous. They playing to sold-out arenas and near-capacity crowds while traveling from city to city in 18-wheelers for weeks on end. They've appeared on television, in feature films, and on toy-store shelves. But monster trucks just don't get the respect they deserve.

About 30,000 people show up for the average monster-truck event. That's 30,000 loyal fans who are often as loud and boisterous as the trucks themselves. What makes them want to watch 10,000 pounds of vehicle get put through its paces? Simple. Monster trucks are big colorful unpredictable heaps of energy.

There's not a spectator in the crowd who's not imagining navigating one of those behemoths through rush-hour traffic. Or showing that Ferrari-driving road hog just who's boss. Or just tearing through backroads instead of paperwork.

Since the sport's humble beginnings in the garage of a 4x4 fanatic, monster-truck racing has grown to colossal—you might even say "monstrous" proportions. And now you can climb into the cab of a dozen different vehicles and start tearing up the track.

Microsoft Monster Truck Madness has been in development for more than two years, and the effort shows. The racing simulation accurately and exactingly



Real-life monster trucks don"t race in rallies, but it sure would be fun if they did.

captures monster-truck racing, both the serious strategy of preparing a vehicle for a demanding rally, circuit, or drag race and the thrill of a 70 mph race to the finish line.

The game includes fictional as well as actual arenas. Events range from the J-styled drags to the A Crazy Eight circuit to the exhausting Arizona rally race—it's all here, duplicated in complex 3D virtual worlds.

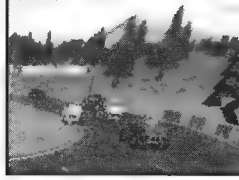
Even the made-up stuff has an authentic look. Monster trucks don't actually race in rallies or circuits because of safety issues. But Monster Truck Madness shows you exactly what they'd be like because developer Terminal Reality, Inc. consulted with monster-truck drivers to ensure authentic game play and physical accuracy.

Let's face it. Most of us are never going to own our own monster truck, or even take one for a spin. But Monster Truck Madness lets you experience the same bumps and jumps that the pros do, the same shake, rattle, and roll of real monster-truck racing.

Monster Truck Madness: Inside Moves was designed to help you squeeze out every ounce of horsepower and prepare for every tunnel and turn. The book breaks down every track and race of every rally and circuit. In addition, you can find out the best joystick to use, or how to go head-to-head with drivers on the Internet. If you're not ready to take on the pros by the last page, you'd better just settle for the family station wagon.

So if you're ready to strap yourself in behind the wheel of a monster, let's go racing.

Chapter One



Getting Started

Are you ready to get dirty? Then strap yourself in behind the wheel of Microsoft Monster Truck Madness. The graphics and sound in this action game are so realistic you'll think you're actually pounding around a hot track or trying to take out the competition in an arena drag.

But first things first. While you're probably dying to get out there and rip up the course, you can't get on the track and race the truck until you've started the engine, and you can't play Monster Truck Madness until it's properly installed.

Setup

For playing under Windows 95, our suggested lower-end system for Monster Truck Madness is as follows:

- Personal computer with a Pentium 75 MHz processor
- 8 MB of RAM
- 90 MB of available hard disk space
- 4X CD-ROM drive
- PCI SVGA video card with 1 MB of memory
- 256-color display
- Microsoft Windows 95
- Mouse or other pointing device (joystick recommended)
- Sound board and speakers or headphones recommended

The manufacturer's suggested system may differ.

By itself, Windows 95 runs best with a minimum of 8 MB of RAM, so you'll probably be happier with the performance of a high-end game

such as Monster Truck Madness if your PC has at least 16 MB of RAM. Installation is quick and easy. To install the game on a system running Windows 95, follow these steps:

1. Start Windows 95.
2. Load the Monster Truck Madness disc into your CD-ROM drive.
3. The Monster Truck setup window appears on screen.
4. Click on the Install icon.
5. Answer the questions as they appear on-screen.
6. Sit back as the installation program completes.

If for some reason you've disabled the AutoRun function, you need to do two additional things. First, double-click on the My Computer icon, and then double-click on the icon for the CD-ROM drive. Now, double-click on the Setup icon.

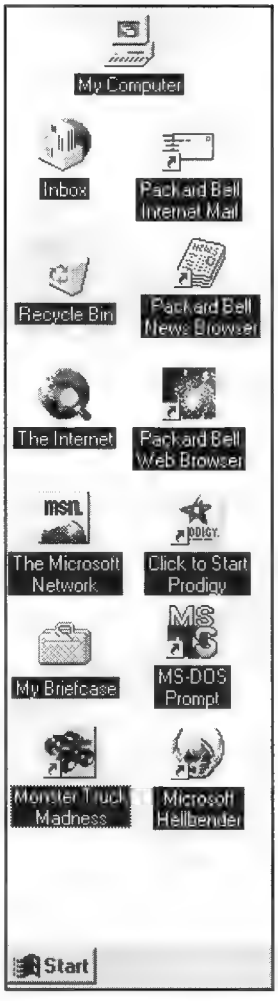
Installation is a snap with Windows 95.

The default directory where Setup places Monster Truck Madness is C:\Program Files\Microsoft Games\Monster Truck Madness. When installing, if you choose the Typical option, the game occupies almost 90 MB on your hard drive. If you choose Complete, the game

needs 195 MB of hard-drive space, but that extra space enables the game to run faster.

Starting the Game

After you choose your installation preference, you can choose to install a shortcut icon. If you do, double-click on the Monster Truck Madness shortcut icon on your desktop when you're ready to start trucking, and you're presented with the opening screen. If you chose not to have a shortcut installed, click on the Start button, point to Programs, point to Microsoft Games, and select Monster Truck Madness.

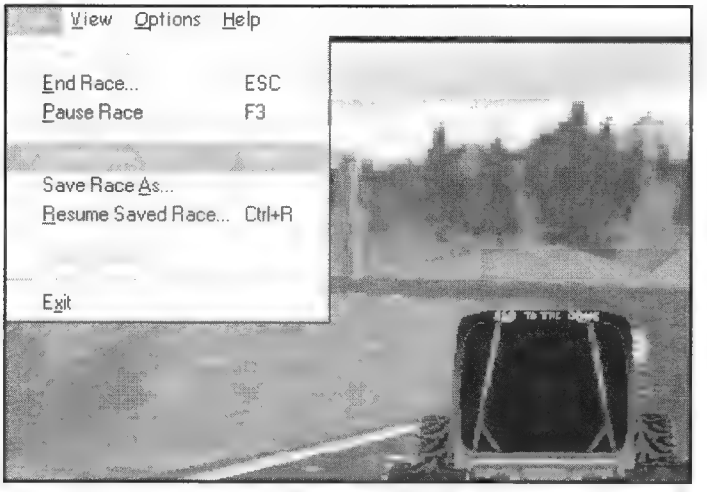


You can conveniently start your game with a few clicks by using the shortcut icon.

Menu, Please

It's easy to get lost in a sea of menus before you even put wheel to the road. In the menu bar at the top of the game window are four drop-down menus labeled Race, View, Options, and Help. Click on any of these to open the associated drop-down menu. When the menu bar is active, one character in each menu name is underlined; you can use these keyboard shortcuts to open the associated menu by first pressing the Alt key (which activates the menu bar), then pressing the underlined character. When a menu is displayed, you can select a command from it either by clicking on the name of the command or by pressing the underlined character from the command name.

The menu bar.



To save a race, click the menu bar, click Race, and highlight Save.

Race

Race options (including commands to end the game or view the Hall of Fame) are accessed from this menu.

To start a new race, click Race on the menu bar and choose New Race either by clicking on the command name or pressing N. You can also begin a new race by pressing the F2 key; you don't need to open the Race pull-down menu to use this approach.

To end a race, press Esc. A dialog box appears with the question, "Are you sure you wish to end the current race?" Select Yes, and you're back to the track selection screen. Select No, and you return to your current race.

To pause a race in progress, press F3, or press P. You will then be given the option to Resume or Quit the race.

To save a race, press Ctrl+S, or choose the Save Race command from the Race menu. The default location for saved games is in the same folder where the game is installed. The first time you save a game, you're prompted for a name for the file in which the game is to be saved. Monster Truck Madness uses the "mtm" extension for saved game files. If you save a race once and then save it again further along in the race, the game overwrites the earlier version.

To continue with a saved race, press Ctrl+R and select the game you wish to resume by double-clicking on the file name, or choose Resume Saved Race from the Race menu.

The Cockpit View

If you choose to use the Cockpit view, be sure to familiarize yourself with the dashboard features.

Speedometer: *Displays your current speed. You refer to this indicator more often than you'd think, especially on tight turns.*

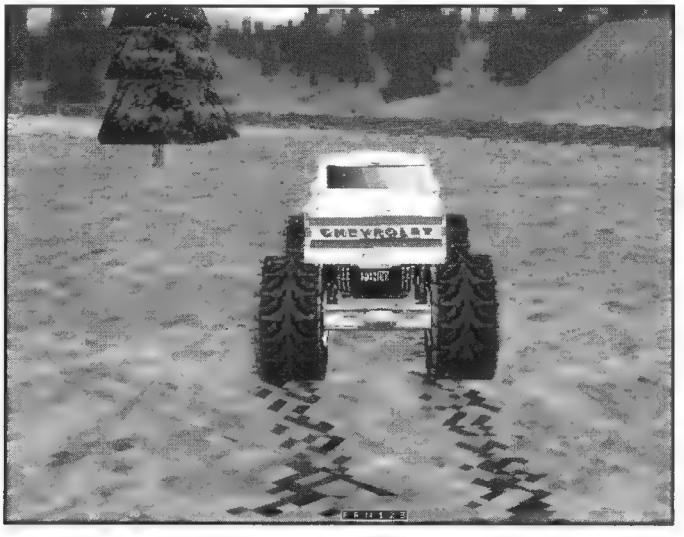
Tachometer: *Indicates your engine's revolutions per minute (rpm). Since horsepower tapers off at 7,500 rpms, ideally, shifting should occur somewhere between 6,000 and 7,000 rpms. Shifting too early leads to poor acceleration and bad track times.*

Gear box: *Displays all the gears. Your current gear is indicated.*

Gear display: *Indicates your current gear.*

Rearview mirror: *Allows you to see if competitors are gaining on you. Press the Minus (-) key on the keyboard to access the rearview mirror.*

Shift indicator light: *Indicates when you should shift gears if you're using a manual transmission.*



The speedometer and tachometer are displayed in both Chase views and turned on and off with the D key.

To visit the Monster Truck Madness Hall of Fame, choose Hall of Fame from the Race menu. You're shown the current standings screen, where you can select any of the race types to see various information (depending on which type you select), including driver performance, current standings, average lap times, best lap times, and points.

View

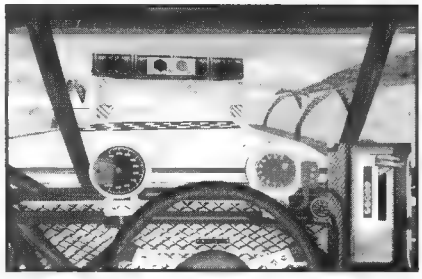
The commands on the View menu consist of a list of eight perspective options, a command for replaying the last race, and other options for modifying the current view. You use these commands to control what you see as you race or when you review.

You select one of these eight options on the View menu to select the perspective from which you wish to see the action. Only one of these options may be selected at a time. If you think about it, that makes sense—you can only be in one place at a time.

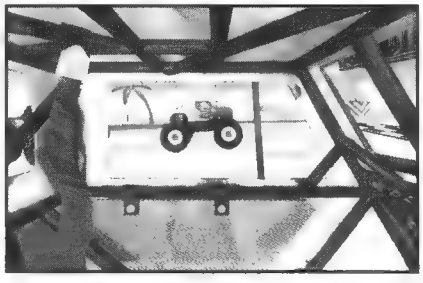
Cockpit (Ctrl+1), for example, puts you behind the steering wheel. While the Cockpit view gives you a great close-up of the action, it gives you less reaction time because it's difficult to see upcoming turns and obstacles. The Cockpit view is especially disorienting in a spin, and this view makes it hard to get an accurate feel for your truck's location on the track. For example, your back wheels might be sliding off the road, but you can't see them in this view.

The Chase 1 view (Ctrl+2) is behind and slightly above your truck. You get a great view of your vehicle, but that's not much help in the heat of a race because you can't see far enough down the road. Although you can react faster in this view than in the Cockpit view, you'll probably use it mostly to admire your performance during instant replays.

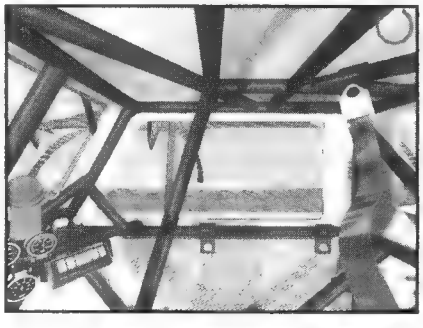
Your best choice for racing is the Chase 2 view (Ctrl+3). It allows you to see the action from far behind and high above your truck. Not only does it allow you to see upcoming turns and curves well in advance (giving you vital decision time), but it also adjusts automatically if you go under a bridge or tunnel so you don't lose sight of your vehicle (as occasionally happens in Chase 1). The tactics and strategies we describe in this book were developed with this view in mind.



When using the Cockpit view, you can look around...



...by pressing the Insert key to look left...



...and pressing the Delete key to look right. Press the Plus (+) key to look out the back window.

Looking Around

You can access other in-cab views while in Cockpit view. You can look out the left window (press the Insert key) or right window (press the Delete key) or rear window (press the Plus [+] key). If you're using a joystick, pull the hat switch left or right to look in the corresponding direction, or pull it back to look behind your vehicle.

The hat switch is also helpful when you're using the rearview mirror. Instead of using the awkward game pad and keyboard combination to bring the mirror into view, you can simply

push forward on the switch. The mirror is visible as long as the hat switch is pushed forward.

Automatic Race Camera (Ctrl+4) offers TV-like coverage, with the camera angle constantly changing to capture the action. It's a fantastic view when you're watching an instant replay, but it's useless in competition. Other views, which have limited play utility but are worth occasionally checking out, are: Spectator Stands—Starting Line view (Ctrl+5), Spectator Stands—Finish Line view (Ctrl+6), Finish Line—On Track view (Ctrl+7), and the overhead Blimp view (Ctrl+8). Again, these views are generally not suitable or recommended for races.

The only command on the View menu which controls what you're seeing rather than how you're viewing the action is Instant Replay. While you're racing, the computer follows you and the other trucks with

Zoom *brings the current replay into full-screen view.*

Camera *allows you to change your viewpoint.*

Truck *selects the vehicle from which you wish to see the replay.*

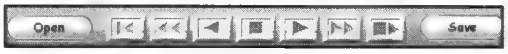
Open *opens a replay you've saved.*

Save *saves the action for later replay.*

You can relive your last race with the Instant Replay feature. It has a wide variety of camera angles so you won't miss any of the action. Just click the corresponding buttons to move the camera. The Plus (+) button zooms in the camera, the Minus (-) button zooms the camera out, the Left Arrow rotates the camera left, the Right Arrow rotates the camera right, the Down Arrow pans down, and the Up Arrow pans up.

a "virtual camera" that captures every second of the action. Selecting the Instant Replay command provides a replay of the current race using that recorded footage. In fact, you can view an instant replay in the middle of a race if you want —for instance, to watch a spectacular crash or a gutsy maneuver. (To see a replay during a race, pause the race and click the Replay button on the Paused dialog box.)

During an instant replay, you're presented with a window that contains controls similar to those found on a VCR and which lets you play footage forward and back and switch trucks and views. You can view these replays from any truck participating in the race using any of the views previous discussed—you have countless replay angles. You can even save the footage for later viewing.



Full Rewind *rewinds the replay back to the very beginning.*

Search/Rewind *quickly scans back through the replay.*

Reverse Play *views the replay backwards.*

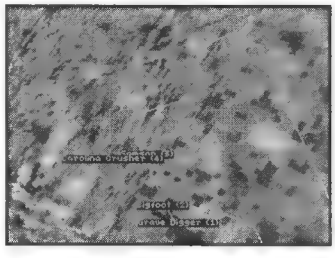
Stop *halts the replay.*

Play *begins the replay.*

Search/Forward *scans quickly through the replay.*

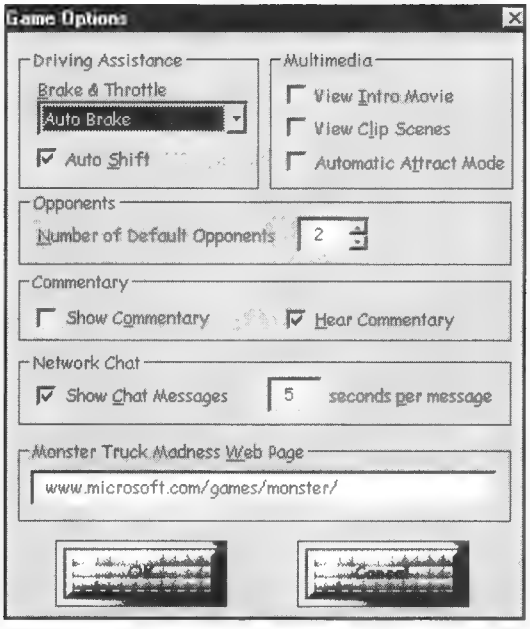
Half Speed *slows down the replay so you can examine a fender bender or other accident.*

Selecting the Overlay Map command from the View menu (or pressing the Tab key) causes the overlay map to appear on the right-hand side of the screen. It shows your position as well as the position of the other trucks in the race. Selecting Directional Finder displays a window in the top right-hand corner of the screen with the location of your next checkpoint and checkpoint number. It can be very useful if you get off course and suddenly find yourself in the middle of nowhere.



When the overlay map is displayed, your position is indicated by a red number. Other trucks appear as white or yellow numbers. The numbers correspond with your position in the race.

When you choose Next Truck from the View menu (or press N), you can cycle through the other competitors. The perspective you're currently



You can turn on and off multimedia features like the movie intro and Army's commentary from the Game Options dialog box.

using is maintained when the "virtual camera" switches to the other trucks.

Choosing the Full Screen command from the View menu (or pressing F4) offers a bigger view of the action and removes the menu bar. (You can toggle back and forth between viewing the action with the full screen and in a window by pressing F4.) Double-click on the top left-hand corner of the action to bring the menu bar back into view.

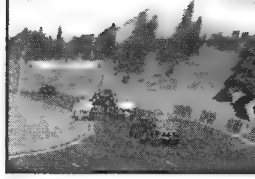
Quick Start

Anxious to jump right into the action? Use the default name "Driver X" at Rookie level and choose "Race." Leave the Truck selection in Default mode and choose Circuit. Next, add any competitor from the Available Trucks menu and choose "Race." Now you can run a basic ten-lap race.

Options

The Options menu consists of five commands: Game, Graphics, Sound, Controls, and Mute Sound. Most of these commands simply change the realism of the game. Better graphics and more sound tend to make for a more realistic experience. However, one of these commands, Controls, opens the most important dialog box available—the one where you select the type of controller to use. Because this dialog is so important, it's covered in its own section, "Controlling the Monster Truck," later in this chapter.

Selecting the Game command brings up a dialog box that allows you to customize the game, including turning off multimedia features such as the introductory movie or adjusting automatic driving assistance such as

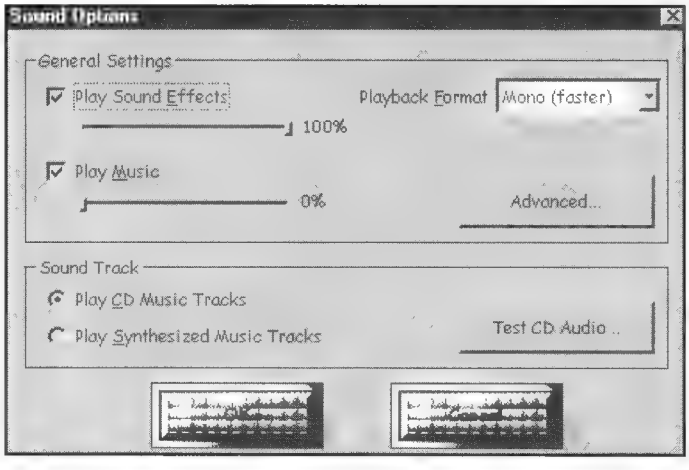


auto-braking, auto-shifting, and auto-throttling—a big help for beginning drivers. (Note that this is very different from the Game menu previously described.) In addition you can change the number of default opponents, turn off Army Armstrong's commentary, enable chat messages when you're enjoying network play, and even access the World Wide Web and visit the Microsoft Monster Truck Web Stop.

Army's Commentary

Army Armstrong is the voice of monster truck racing, so it's only right that he lend his vocal talents to Monster Truck Madness. Armstrong provides subtle clues on your competitors' whereabouts, but you need to listen carefully to what he says. For example, if Armstrong yells, "Boogie Van is flying to the finish line!" and you've just passed a big jump, you should know Boogie Van is at the jump and right on your tail. If he yells, "Bigfoot is on his tippy-toes," or "They're callin' in the whirlybird for Bigfoot!" and Bigfoot is in your immediate vicinity, you know he or she is either close to crashing or has crashed.

This kind of information can be a real help on rally and circuit courses. But the feature has its setbacks, too—sometimes Armstrong pauses, and his sound bites overlap each other. If this happens, you could miss a vital hint that might clue you in on your opponents' location(s).



Adjust the sound options from this menu. You can even play your own CDs by selecting Play CD Music Tracks.

Adjusting the Sound Quality

Choosing Mute Sound from the Options menu (or pressing Ctrl+M) turns off both the commentary and the music. For more precise control, choose the Sound

command from the Options menu to display the Sound Options dialog box. This dialog box offers a wide variety of options, including the opportunity to play your favorite audio disc instead of listening to the game soundtrack.

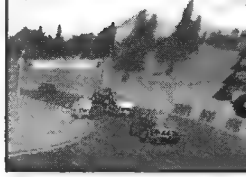
Several options in the dialog box control how the game produces the sounds you hear during play. Selecting Play CD Music Tracks or Play Synthesized Music Tracks in the Sound Options dialog box doesn't create a very noticeable difference. If you can't adjust the CD volume, choose the synthesized music option. The Playback Format option in the Sound Options dialog box lets you choose between Mono, Stereo, or Surround. (If your sound card isn't capable of supporting these last two features, they're grayed out.)

Clicking on the Advanced button brings up the Advanced Sound Options dialog box and allows you to select and adjust the Number of Buffers and the Buffer Size. These buffers control how much information is retrieved from the CD and stored when playing music. If you're experiencing sound delays, you should experiment with decreasing the buffer size. After you've made changes to Number of Buffers and Buffer Size, click on the Test button to get an idea of how the new settings affect sound playback. Clicking on the Default button returns Number of Buffers and Buffer Size to the values that were present when you opened the Advanced Sound Options dialog box.

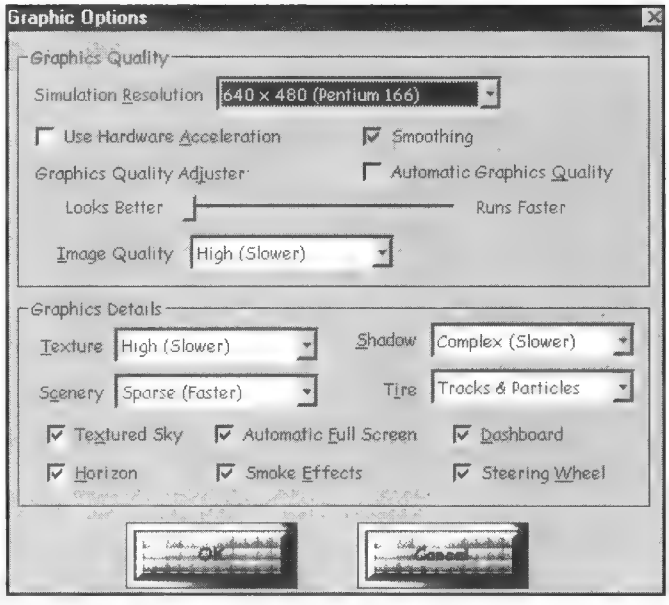
Improving the Display Quality

Adjust the simulation's graphics by choosing the Graphics command from the Options menu. The resulting dialog box allows you to turn off complex graphic effects such as smoke and textured sky, helping slower machines run the game faster. Experiment with the settings in the Graphics dialog box early in your game play to find a solid balance between the visual effects you find appealing and smoothness of play.

As a "real-time" racing simulation, Monster Truck Madness needs to run smoothly and quickly so you can properly react to the obstacles, courses, and other drivers while playing the game. The frame rate is the



speed at which your computer displays or refreshes images and is measured in frames per second (fps). To see at what frame rate your machine is currently running, type in "frame" at any point while playing the game. If your game seems to run slowly or the video display seems choppy, you need to make some adjustments to improve your frame rate.

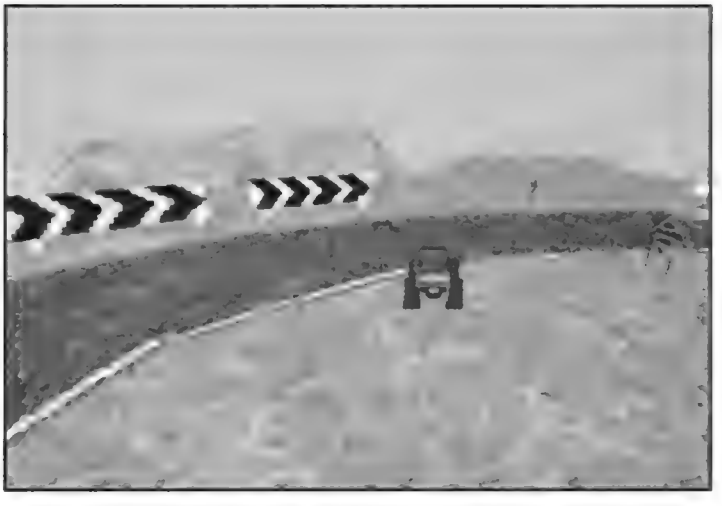


Adjust the game graphics from this menu.

The resolution of your screen, the number of colors displayed, and the special effects you have selected all can affect the frame rate. Your computer (depending on its power) may run the game smoothly with all the texture and scenery settings at a high resolution. On the other hand, if you have a slower processor with limited memory, such as a Pentium 75 with 8 MB (the minimum for running Monster Truck Madness), you may have to turn off some of the graphic options to improve the frame rate. Reducing the complexity of the game's graphics reduces the workload on your computer, thus allowing faster refreshing of the screen, which means a higher frame rate and a smoother running game. The optimal frame rate for Monster Truck Madness is 24-30 frames per second (fps); the minimally acceptable frame rate is 12 fps.

In addition to the type of processor your system uses, the amount of memory on your system can affect the frame rate. Even more dramatically, the availability of a graphics-accelerator card and the amount of memory it has can change the frame rate performance. Even if you're stuck with a basic system without a lot of extra memory or a graphics accelerator, there

The highest graphics mode.

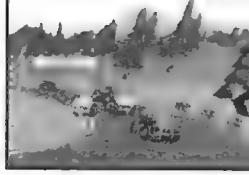


The lowest graphics mode.

are still things you can do to improve your frame rate.

Start by adjusting the screen resolution. The three resolution settings in Monster Truck Madness are: 320 x 200 (Pentium 60), which is the lowest resolution but allows the fastest frame rate; 320 x 400 (Pentium 100), a good resolution, but still pixelated; and 640 x 480 (Pentium 166), the highest resolution. Since you're trading scenery complexity and game detail for speed of play, try out each and see which works best for you.

Another way to improve the frame rate your computer delivers is to adjust the graphic features. These features can be customized in the Graphics dialog box displayed when you select the Graphics command from the Options menu. Begin by turning off minor graphic features like the textured sky



or track particles. If you're still experiencing difficulties, change the texture detail and other graphic details to Low.

Less Is More

Scenery is one of the options in the Graphics Details dialog box. By setting the Scenery to sparse, not only do you slightly improve the frame rate, but you also have fewer obstacles to deal with on the open road. For example, a patch of trees that has been causing problems on a tight turn might disappear, creating an opportunity for a new shortcut. But be careful—switching off Scenery might also remove helpful obstacles from the game: the bridge railings you encounter in Yucatan Adventure are a good example.

Scenery turned on.

Scenery turned off.

The following list of other features can affect the frame rate and the graphics. You should see the difference when you change each one.

Number of Opponents: Racing against fewer trucks can help improve your frame rate. Adjust the number of competitors by clicking on the arrow next to Adding or Removing trucks in the Competing Trucks selection box, which appears on the menu screen after you select the Tournament, Rally, Circuit, or Drag screen.

Graphics Quality: Aside from choosing the resolution for the game, you can adjust other options. Use this dialog box to select or install a graphics-accelerator card or to select different settings for Automatic Graphics Quality and Image Quality. We don't recommend turning on Automatic Graphics Quality because it makes scenery pop on and off annoyingly, which might cause you trouble while driving.

Graphic Details, Textures, Effects, and Scenery: Try turning off complex texture details such as Textured Sky, Horizon, Smoke Effects, Dashboard, and Steering Wheel to improve game performance. Leave Automatic Full Screen enabled because the game runs smoother in full

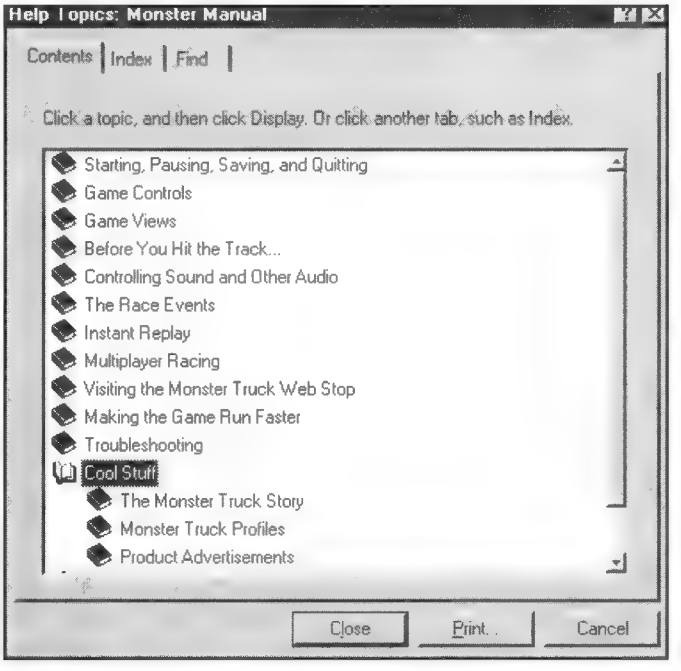
In the highest resolution, minute details are visible on the trucks and in the backgrounds. Notice the Goodyear markings on Grave Digger's tires.

While the game can run in a smaller box in Windows, you should play the game in full screen to keep the frame rate high and the action smooth.

screen. Omitting effects like smoke or track particles make the game look less realistic but help it run better.

Tinker with the features to find out what works best for your computer. Finally, we wouldn't recommend enabling the High Texture Details unless you have at least 32 MB of memory on your system.

The game is probably at peak performance when the system is set to display 256 colors. If you're displaying more colors, Monster Truck Madness may run poorly, and the animation might seem choppy and unsteady. However, a 3D graphics-acceleration card can provide considerably improved game performance even while the monitor is set to higher color modes.

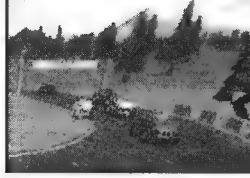


The in-game manual covers a variety of help topics.

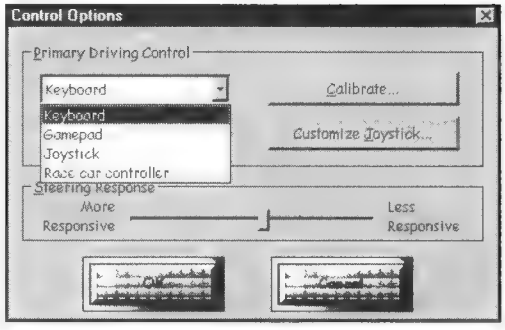
To set your monitor to display 256 colors with Windows 95, start by making sure all your programs are closed. Then click on Start, point to Settings, then select Control Panel. On the Control Panel screen, double-click on the Display icon and select the Settings tab in the Display Properties dialog box. (Alternatively, you can click on the desktop with the right mouse button, select Properties, and then select settings.) Select 256 Color on the Color Palette drop-down list and click on OK. You should see a dialog box informing you that you need to restart your system. Make sure all your programs are closed, then click OK. In some circumstances, Windows can make the change without restarting your system. In those cases, you see a dialog box asking if you want to keep the change. Click OK.

Help

This one's easy enough. Select the Help menu to access the online manual, control descriptions or get more information about game developer Terminal Reality.



Controlling the Monster Truck



Make sure you have the controller that you're using selected in the control option.

You can play Monster Truck Madness from the keyboard or with a game pad, joystick, or race car controller. To configure the game to use the correct controller, first make sure the hardware is properly installed and recognized by Windows 95. Then select the Controls command from the Options menu and make sure the controller is selected in the dialog box. You can also use this dialog box to calibrate and test your joystick or game pad and customize your joystick and keyboard (game pads can't be customized). More information about this process—and our recommended choices—are in Chapter Nine: Hardware and Peripherals.

Game Pad and Keyboard

A game pad gives Monster Truck Madness an arcade feel, although it does have drawbacks. For example, since you can't customize the game pad, the accelerator is always on the directional pad. And when you're steering your truck through a sharp turn—also done with the directional pad—your thumb can take a real beating. It's also cumbersome to have to glance down at the keyboard in the middle of a race to change viewpoints or bring up the rearview mirror.

Subtle taps on the game pad or the keyboard help you easily correct your driving and lightly nudge other dirvers.

Button configurations vary depending on the peripheral you're using. A game pad allows you to honk the horn, give a Rebel yell, or change viewpoints.

Game Pad Controls

To accelerate: Press Up on the directional pad.

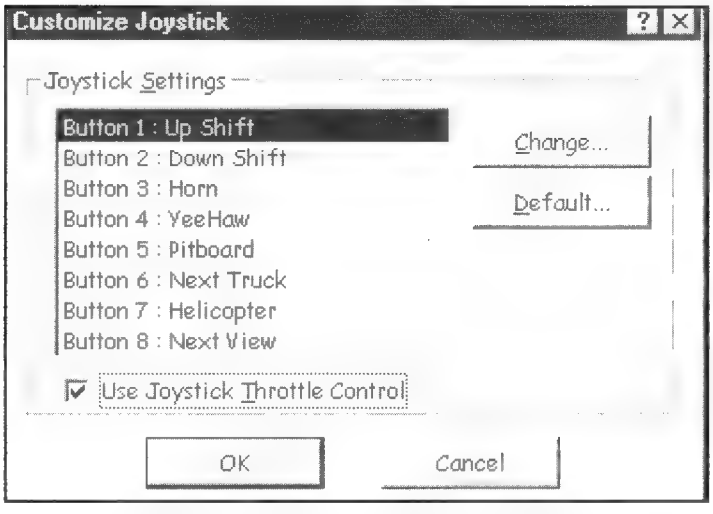
To brake/reverse: Press Down on the directional pad. (Once the truck comes to a stop, you must continue to hold Down on the directional pad to put the truck in reverse. A warning beep alerts you that the truck is in reverse gear).

To turn right: Press Right on the directional pad.

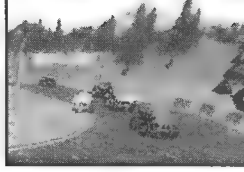
To turn left: Press Left on the directional pad.

Joystick

Because a joystick is more versatile than any other controller, we recommend using a joystick to control your monster truck—specifically, the Microsoft Sidewinder 3D Pro, which is easily installed using Windows 95. In fact, you might think Monster Truck Madness was designed with this joystick in mind. Unlike other controllers, the joystick offers a wide range of options right at your fingertips, and it's easy to use, requiring just slight and subtle taps to the stick and throttle to get things back on the



You can customize your joystick in this menu. Make sure to click OK to save any changes you've made before you close the menu.



right road. It can be customized easily, and each button can be individually assigned a particular task, such as switching camera views or displaying lap times.

No matter which joystick you use, we suggest you check your joystick configuration by choosing Controls from the Options menu and then clicking on the Customize Joystick button. Use the resulting dialog box to customize, calibrate, and test your joystick.

The following configuration is the default for the Microsoft Sidewinder 3D Pro. Other joysticks may have different default settings. And no matter which joystick you use, you should experiment with customizing it to your personal preferences.

Joystick Controls

To accelerate: Push the joystick Forward.

To brake: Pull Back on the joystick.

To turn the truck right: Push Right on the joystick.

To turn the truck left: Push Left on the joystick.

Button 1: Upshift	**Button 5:** Pitboard
Button 2: Downshift	**Button 6:** Camera
Button 3: Horn	**Button 7:** Helicopter
Button 4: Yee Haw	**Button 8:** Camera

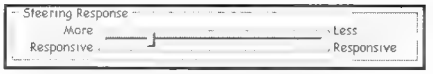
Hat Switch: Moves the external camera around the vehicle and accesses the rearview mirror inside the truck's cab.

Using the Throttle

In the Customize Joystick dialog box, you can opt to use the throttle on the joystick as an acceleration device. To use the throttle this way, click on Use Joystick Throttle Control. Now push the throttle forward to accelerate and pull back on the throttle to slow down, stop, and go into reverse gear.

Steering Responsiveness

The steering responsiveness is a very important feature for all types of controllers, but particularly for joysticks. Setting the feature correctly could mean the difference between an easily won race and an uncontrolled

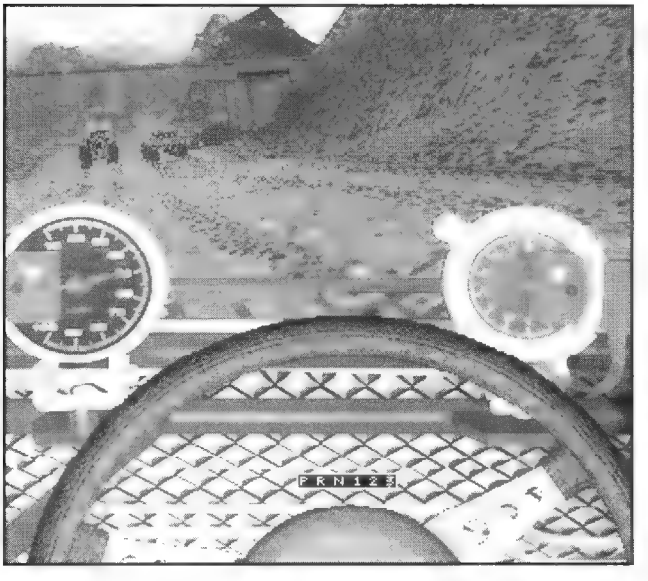


Among the things you can adjust in the Control Options dialog box is the responsiveness of the steering. A game pad needs more steering responsiveness than a joystick. Rookies using a game pad should set it here for help on tight corners.

skid into oblivion. If you find the truck skidding or spinning out on tight turns, you might need less steering responsiveness. Likewise, if you're understeering tight turns or finding some turns too difficult to take, you might need more steering responsiveness. Keep in mind that a joystick requires less steering responsiveness than a game pad.

Driving Wheel or Race Car Controller

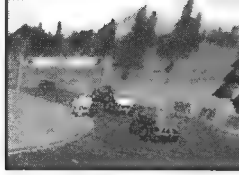
A driving wheel offers unparalleled realism and great control. However, a driving wheel offers you just the basic options—use the wheel to turn right and left and the pedals to brake and accelerate. On more elaborate models, you can also shift and change views. Check your owners' manual for a list of features offered by your driving wheel.



No matter what type of controller you use, the steering wheel in the Cockpit view turns as you manipulate the controller. This can help you tell how far you're turning the wheel left or right.

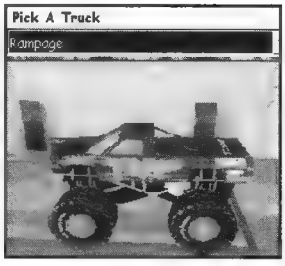
Start Your Engines!

To begin a race, enter your driver's name and select a skill level—Rookie, Intermediate, or Professional—from the title screen that appears when you start Monster Truck Madness. Then click on the Multiplayer button to play online, or click on the Races button to begin a



race with computer opponents. There are four types of race: Drag, Circuit, Rally, and Tournament. In a Drag race, you go one-on-one with a single competitor on the monster truck drag tracks.

During a Circuit race, you vie for the top position against a field of other trucks on a closed track. You can select the number of laps (from 1 to 20) and also the number of competitors (from two to eight, although game quality deteriorates with higher numbers). In addition, you must go through checkpoints placed along the track to get points and proper credit for the race.



You can choose from a dozen of the most popular monster trucks on the Penda racing circuit.

A Rally, or endurance race, is a single-lap race around a closed course. Rally tracks are longer than circuit races and often more demanding. They also have checkpoints that must be passed to earn points for the race.

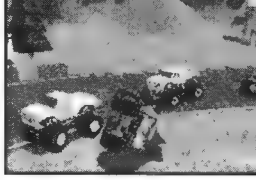
Finally, a Tournament is a combination of one or more circuit races, drag races, and rally races. After a Tournament, all the points of the competitors are tallied, and a winner is named.

Good luck—and get racing!

Troubleshooting

If you can't seem to get Monster Truck Madness to run properly, or if you still have questions, refer to the in-game Monster Manual accessed from the Help menu. Remember, if game play seems slow or choppy, experiment with your graphics configuration under Options on the menu bar.

Chapter Two



The Monster Trucks

You've spent all afternoon rebuilding the engine you blew on the Arizona course. The dry heat and sand wreaked havoc on your suspension system during the long rally. And the parts you need won't arrive until tomorrow. So you think about switching trucks for the next race, hoping to improve your time. The choice is up to you in Microsoft Monster Truck Madness—you're pit chief, driver, and points keeper. But make your choice quickly because another run is coming up.

You can't appreciate the true massiveness of a hulking 10,000-pound monster truck until you're behind the wheel. Each truck is a raging mountain of metal and rubber, and it's up to you to keep the beast under control. Monster trucks are the ultimate off-road vehicles, and when these rides are "tricked out" with cutting-edge technology, they're unstoppable! So let's get ready to rev those engines!

Tip: *We recommend your first truck have a long wheelbase. Pickups such as Bear Foot and Overkill are good vehicles for first-time drivers or veteran hotdoggers. The reason? The long wheelbase makes the truck easier to control and handle in tight turns. You might have to bring the torque down to around 1,700 if you feel the truck is getting out of hand.*

The Dirty Dozen

There are 12 official MTRA (Monster Truck Racing Association) monster trucks included in Monster Truck Madness. While the game programmers kept most of the trucks evenly matched for more competitive racing, each truck nonetheless has its own characteristics. Ford wins the product endorsement category with six of the trucks;

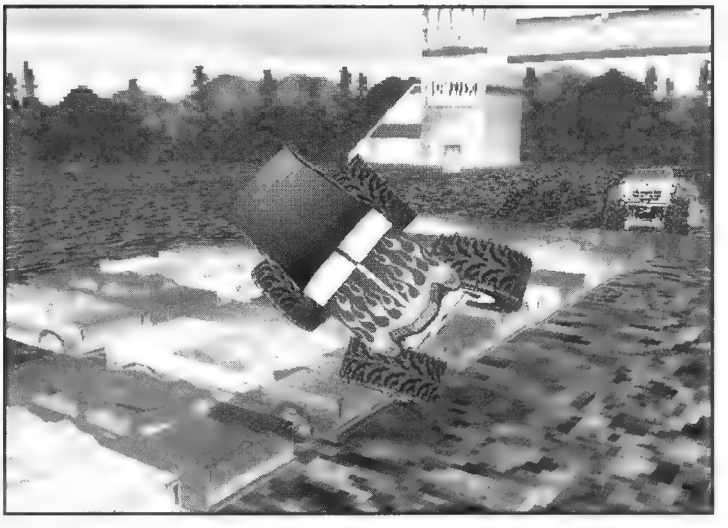
Chevrolet comes in a close second with four. Dodge trucks occupy the two final slots. However, a good driver can get maximum performance out of *any* vehicle by learning to drive it properly.

The trucks fall into a couple of different categories. Pickup trucks come in three sizes-long, short, and medium-wide. You also have two paneled vans from which to choose.

The Pickups

Each "long truck," such as Overkill, Rampage, and Bear Foot, has a long wheelbase and chassis. A long truck is good for races like Canyon Adventure and Mud Pies because the long wheelbase makes the truck more stable on jumps and across bumpy terrain.

Short trucks have a short wheelbase. Trucks such as Samson and Carolina Crusher maneuver well on tight turns and can achieve some great high speeds. But they have problems on uneven surfaces.



Grave Digger's top-heavy body makes it an easy target in multiplayer games.

Medium-wide pickups which include Bigfoot, Monster Patrol (on the short side of medium), Power Wheels, Wildfoot, and Snake Bite (also on the short side of medium), offer drivers a happy medium between the long and short chassis. They're well-rounded trucks that perform well on almost any course, making them a force to reckon with.

The Vans

You can also choose from two panel vans—Boogey Van and Grave Digger—in Monster Truck Madness. Both vans fall into the short wheelbase category, and they have the best turning radius of any of the vehicles. However, they also have tight suspensions and handle bumps poorly. Use the vans on J-style drags where taking tight turns can be the difference between first place and last. But if you're thinking about taking one of these monsters on a bumpy road rally, think again. In addition to their inability to handle tough terrain, they're top heavy, making them an easy target in multiplayer games.

Name-Calling

Obviously, monster trucks come in all shapes and sizes. About the only thing they have in common is that they're usually loud and often difficult to control. But with these exceptional candidates, you can select a truck that performs well in any racing event.

Bear Foot

Fred Shafer is a long-time gear junkie. He built his first race car at the age of 14 and was one of the first independent owners to build a monster truck. Three-time champion Bear Foot is one of the most rugged monster trucks on the tour.

Bear Foot

With a proper set of tires and shocks, this Dodge workhorse can handle almost anything it encounters—and do it at near top speed.

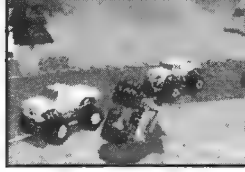
Bear Foot is based in Pontoon Beach, IL. The body is a fabricated Dodge Ram pickup, with a custom-made body frame and suspension system. Bear Foot runs on alcohol-based Methanol and uses a Dodge engine to deliver 1,500 horses at 6,000 rpm. Goodyear Terra Tires keep the truck on the ground.

The truck gets its name from Shafer's pet bears, Sugar and Spice. Like those animals, Bear Foot is sure footed and fast. The wide and long Dodge Ram chassis provides excellent ground coverage, offering unmatched stability on almost any course. Use Bear Foot on a tough, rocky track or a hilly course with jumps.

Bigfoot

The undisputed king of monster trucks is also one of the most popular and all-around capable, trucks on the road. Driven by Dan Runte and Eric Meager, the truck was designed and built by Bob Chandler, the founder of monster-truck racing (see Chapters Ten and Eleven). Bigfoot has a wide wheelbase and the pulling power to get the job done. As the crown jewel in Team Bigfoot's racing stable (there are currently more than a dozen namesakes), Bigfoot is the "Original Monster Truck®." The monster truck portrayed in Monster Truck Madness is the latest incarnation, Bigfoot 15.

Bigfoot



This study Ford is good for almost any task. Its medium-sized wide wheelbase helps make almost any type of turn manageable, and it has a high, powerful torque, too. Bigfoot has a fabricated fiberglass 1997 Ford F-150 pickup body with a Deflecta-Shield cab extender.

Bigfoot, whose design was computer aided, boasts an all-tubular frame and weighs in at a hefty 10,700 pounds. It props that weight on patented experimental Firestone 23-degree flotation tires.

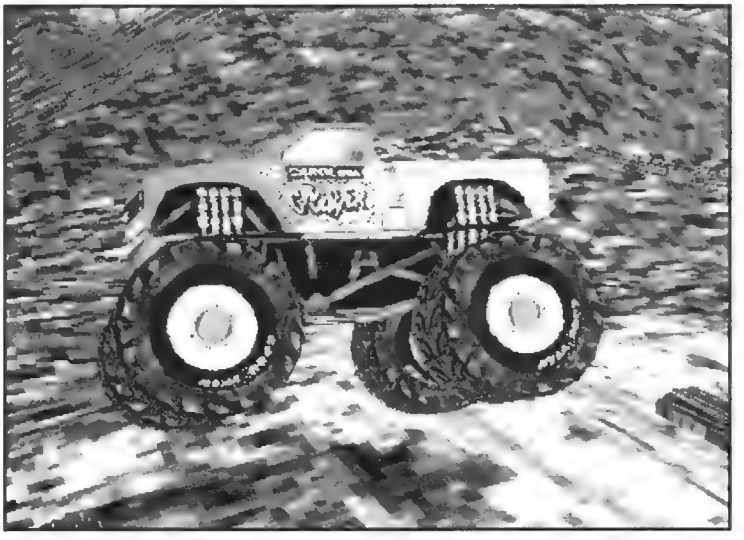
Boogey Van

Boogey Van

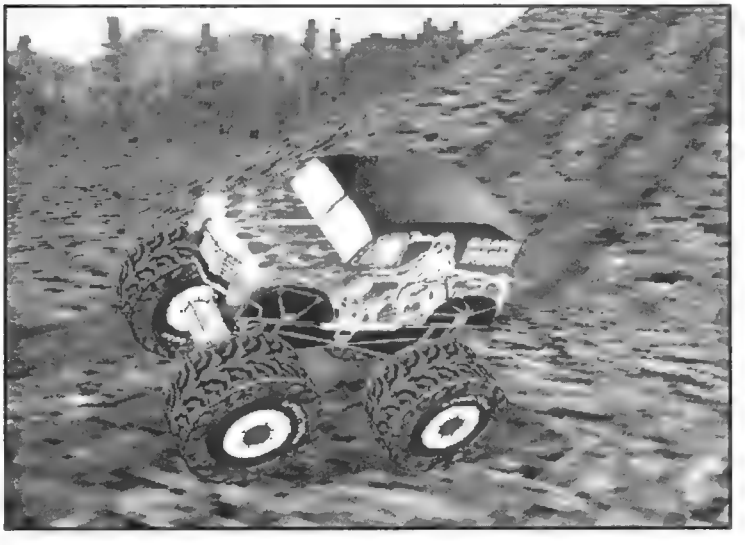
Boogey Van is a unique ride in more ways than one. For example, it's the only vehicle included in the game that's driven by a woman in the real world. Pamela Vaters is the owner and co-crew chief. She's been driving since 1992; before that she was crew chief for the monster truck Black Stallion, driven by her husband, Michael.

Boogey Van is a 1995 Ford Aerostar, and while the body style may not sound very glamorous, it's got it where it counts. In addition to a Ford SVO engine that pumps out the power, the van features a custom-built chassis designed by Michael Vaters. Goodyear Terra tires boost Boogey Van to its 12-foot height and it weighs in at 10,232 pounds.

Because of Boogey Van's short wheelbase, it's poorly suited to most circuit races and equally handicapped on rally races. This machine's a drag racer and should be used exclusively there.



Carolina Crusher

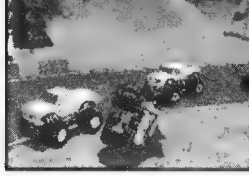


Grave Digger

Carolina Crusher

Driven by its owner Gary Porter, the Carolina Crusher is a quick and nimble medium-sized truck that can handle almost any kind of terrain with a proper Garage setup. The actual truck is the winner of the 1991 Penda Monster Truck Racing Championship, and its fastest recorded drag time is 4.92 seconds. It's a powerful little monster compared to other pickups in the same category, and it sure knows how to move!

Based in Wadesboro, NC, the truck body is a 1995 Chevrolet. Carolina Crusher weighs in at 10,000 pounds and stands about 11 feet tall. It's a true off-road vehicle, with excellent handling capabilities on tight turns.



Grave Digger

With racing slogans and mottoes like "Burying the competition since 1981" and "Anything but first is dead last," it's easy to see why Grave Digger is every monster-truck driver's nightmare. Built in Kill Devil Hills, NC, out of discarded truck parts, Grave Digger has a tight, short wheelbase that enables it to turn quickly— terrorizing even the most seasoned competitor. The truck is excellent for drags because of its unique Chevy panel van body—it's sleek and heavy, so the truck digs in and hooks up well at the start of a drag.

Grave Digger's all-fiberglass body is modeled after a 1950 Chevrolet Panel Wagon. Fifteen hundred horses kick out the jams, and the truck weighs 10,000 pounds. It's driven by owner Dennis Anderson, who, with the rest of the driving team, is based in Poplar Branch, NC.

Monster Patrol

Its not just whirling police lights that make Monster Patrol a peculiar truck. The vehicle seems almost part dune buggy because of its signature rear spoiler wing.

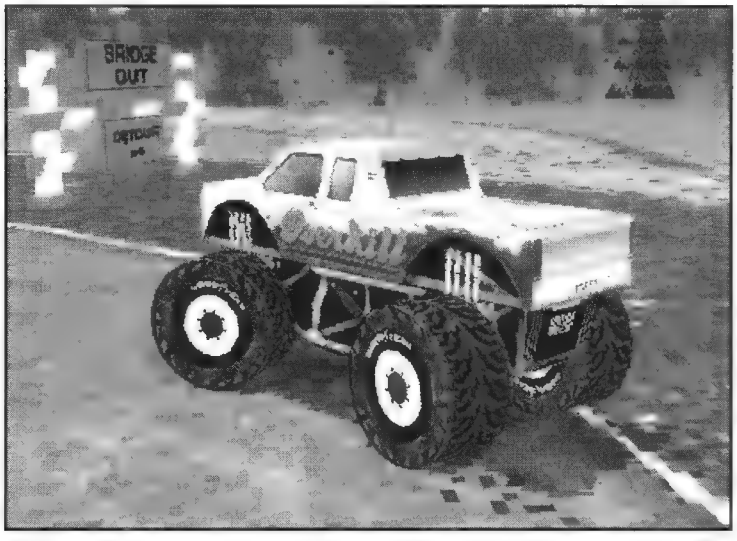
Owned and driven by Paul Shafer, Monster Patrol pulled onto the monster truck scene in 1993.

The truck is based on a 1995 three-quarter ton Chevy, but what really stands out—aside from its audacious green paint job—is the rear spoiler. The spoiler helps pull down the truck's center of gravity, keeping it

Monster Patrol

aerodynamically sound on high jumps and bumpy roads. Its medium-sized wide frame also gives it good traction on loose surfaces.

Based in Portage, IN, the truck stands nearly 13 feet tall and weighs 10,000 pounds. Goodyear tires complete the picture of this all-around outstanding off-roader, whose fastest drag time is 5.02 seconds.



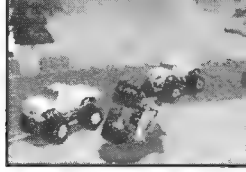
Overkill

Overkill

Like many monster truckers, Overkill's owner and driver, Kirk Dabney, got his start by repairing and reconditioning 4x4s in his own workshop. Overkill was originally built to promote Dabney's business, but requests from fans eager to see what the truck could do tempted Dabney onto the track.

Overkill hails from Fort Wayne, IN, and is one of the few trucks on the pro tour that weigh less than the MTRA-required 10,000 pound. minimum. At 9,800 pounds, Overkill must carry 200 pounds of "load weight" piled on by its crew. The truck is a Ford F350 Super Cab pickup with a customized tubular frame.

Overkill has one of the longest wheelbases of any monster truck; this configuration makes it perfectly suited for off-road bumpy action. It's a powerful truck that's often underestimated. Rookies and pros alike will find it both accommodating and forgiving.



Power Wheels

Power Wheels, another fine truck from Team Bigfoot, is a close relative of that popular vehicle. Like Bigfoot 15, Power Wheels is a sturdy 1997 Ford F150 with a medium-sized wide body. It, too, is a good all-around truck that can handle almost any racing situation.

Driven by Dan Runte, a two-time MTRA Driver of the Year, Power Wheels is one of the most powerful and intimidating trucks on the tour. Its fastest-recorded drag time is 4.77 seconds.

A 572 c.i. (cubic inch) Ford Hemi, a 871 BDS blower, and fuel-injection power make Power Wheels one tough cookie. The behemoth weighs in at 10,200 pounds

Power Wheels

Rampage

and stands almost 11 feet tall. It's one of the best all-around trucks and drives like a dream even over rocky hills and stony overpasses.

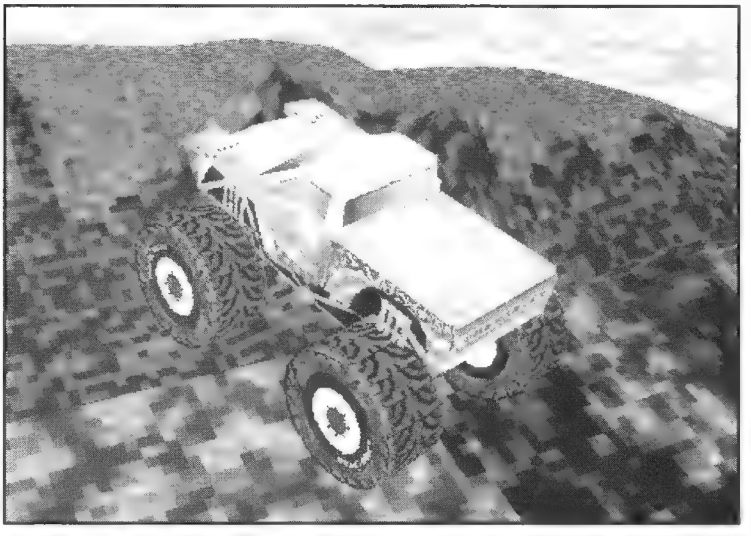
Rampage

Like Bear Foot, Rampage is a Fred Shafer-owned vehicle. It's a powerful and well-rounded Dodge driven by Todd Frolik, whose fastest-recorded drag time is 4.68 seconds. Frolik uses the truck's long wheelbase to keep the vehicle stable on big jumps and hard landings. This aggressive truck keeps the power flowing with a 572-c.i. Dodge Hemi Transmission. It's a serious competitor and a good choice for rookie drivers.

Based in Pontoon Beach, IL, this 1996 Dodge Ram stands at 11 feet and weighs in at 10,500 pounds. This truck reacts almost identically to Bear Foot on the track, so use it on rocky and hilly courses.

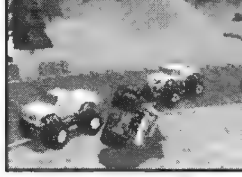
Samson

Samson is a medium-sized mighty monster with an attitude and style all its own. Since it first appeared on the monster-truck tour in 1994, Samson and its driver and owner Dan Patrick have been turning heads with the pickup's stocky good looks and incredible times. Samson was the very first monster truck to break the five-second drag time, with 4.98 seconds. Patrick is an ex-member of Team Bigfoot, so he brings a lot of experience to his powerful racing team.



Samson

Samson is based in Kingston, OH. The truck body is a 1995 Chevrolet;



under the hood is a 556 c.i. Keith Black engine. Samson handles well on difficult corners and is a good jumping truck. The giant stands 10 feet tall, is 11 feet wide, and weighs 10,420 pounds.

Snake Bite

Snake Bite

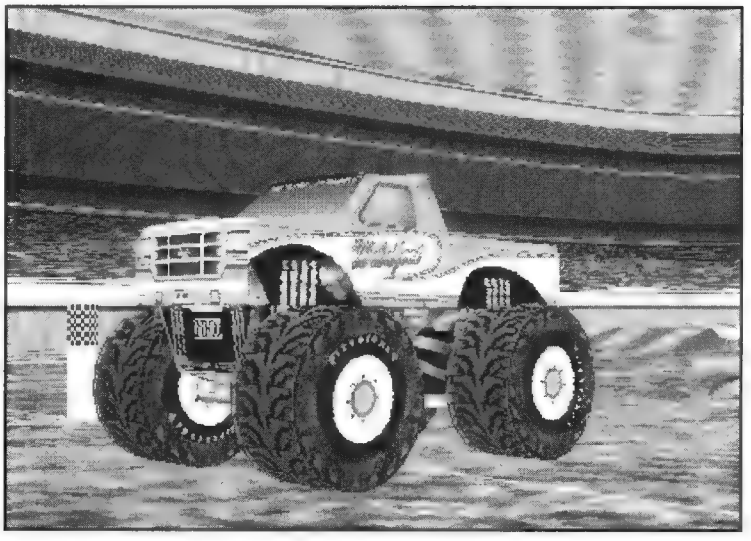
The driver of Snake Bite, the masked Colt Cobra, is rumored to be a former Bigfoot driver. But the driver isn't the only thing about Snake Bite that's in costume—this power hungry Ford features glowing eyes and fangs. Snake Bite is also a personal favorite of Monster Truck Madness' lead programmer, Mark Randal, president of TRI, Inc. It's easy to see why.

Based in Cobra Creek, CO, Snake Bite has a fiberglass body, a customized chassis, and, of course, a snakeskin paint job. Fittingly, the truck has a 572-c.i. Battlesnake Ford engine with a 871-c.i. Viperod blower. The truck weighs in at an even 10,000 pounds.

Snake Bite's wide body and medium-sized wheelbase give drivers the best of both long-truck and short-truck worlds. It's a sure-footed python that can strike at anytime. Watch out for Snake Bite in multiplayer mode!

Wildfoot

The last truck in the stable—and another of the many trucks on Team Bigfoot—Wildfoot is driven by Eric Tack. When it was known as Bigfoot 11, Wildfoot set the world record for the longest monster-truck jump, 117 feet. The truck's barely slowed down since then.



Wildfoot

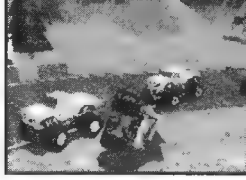
The truck body is a 1996 F250 Ford pickup with a Deflecta-Shield cab extender. Under the hood is a 572-c.i. Ford with a 871 BDS blower and fuel injection. The truck, which was partially computer designed, stands 10 feet tall and weighs 10,000 pounds.

Wildfoot has a medium-sized wheelbase similar to that of Snake Bite, making it a good choice for a first time driver or power-hungry seasoned pro.

Tire, Gear, and Suspension Setups

As we said earlier in this chapter, the trucks in Monster Truck Madness are evenly matched in the game to allow more competitive racing. Still, trucks can be "tweaked" to maximize their performance.

For instance, if you lower the gear ratio to get faster acceleration, that low-end gear selection won't give you a great top speed. The reverse is true if you choose a tall gear: you're trading acceleration for higher top speeds. You should try to find a happy medium to get the best performance: Set the gear ratio at 1,700 or 1,800 rpms to get both a good top speed and fast acceleration. You need to find this balance for courses such as the Round and Round circuit, where a quick top speed proves counter-productive in the turns. But on most courses you should set your gear for good top-end speed—this is a racing game, after all.



Below, with a list of tracks, are the Garage settings for each race as recommended by the game's programmers. While playing Monster Truck Madness, you should visit the Garage before each race, even if it's just to confirm that you've already set the proper tire, gear, and suspension configurations. Again, the trucks are too evenly matched for you to see a significant difference in the settings, but tire and suspension adjustments make a small difference. And any difference can give you an edge.

The Circuit Courses

A Crazy Eight: Because this is a wide-open course, set your gear ratio high at 2,000. A "tall" gear gives the trucks "legs" in the long straightaways. Use a hard suspension and a medium tire cut because most of the ground you're covering is paved. Some drivers may opt to loosen up the suspension for a fast and free ride.

Canyon Adventure: Another high-speed course that requires a stable ride. Set your gear tall (around 1,900 to 2,000) for the long straightaways and use a deep tire cut for the hilly, uneven terrain. A medium suspension setting should help keep you from bouncing around.

Mud Pies: This course requires a lower gear ratio because of the loose surface and winding turns, so set the gear around 1,600. You should use a deep tire cut because of the muddy surface, and soft suspension as well. These settings should help you stick to the track and lap the competition.

Round and Round: This curvaceous track requires a tall gear, so set the gear ratio to 2,000. The sandy rock-like surface works best with a medium tire cut and a medium suspension setting. If you find yourself bounding off the track at inappropriate times, it's possible your suspension settings are too tight or hard. Begin with a medium suspension; if that doesn't work, change to a soft suspension.

Winding Way: While this track does have some tough turns, it's a high-speed track, so use a tall top-end gear-ratio such as 2,000, a deep tire cut,

and medium suspension settings. Again, if this setting doesn't work for you, experiment with the settings to correct the problem.

Rally Courses

Arizona: The Arizona rally is a high-speed rally, so set your gear configuration to 2,000. Because of the track's varied surfaces, you should use a medium tire cut and medium suspension settings. But most of all, hold on and enjoy the ride!

Highlands Rally: This cunning course is a high-speed track; you need a high gear ratio to exploit it fully. So set the gear to 2,000, your tires to a medium cut, and, again, use a medium suspension setting for the tight turns.

Yucatan Adventure: Let it rip on this wide-open course: Set the gear ratio to 2,000, your tires to a shallow cut, and your suspension to hard. Some players might want a medium-cut tire for better traction. It's up to a driver's personal preference.

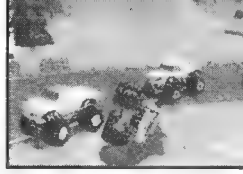
Drags

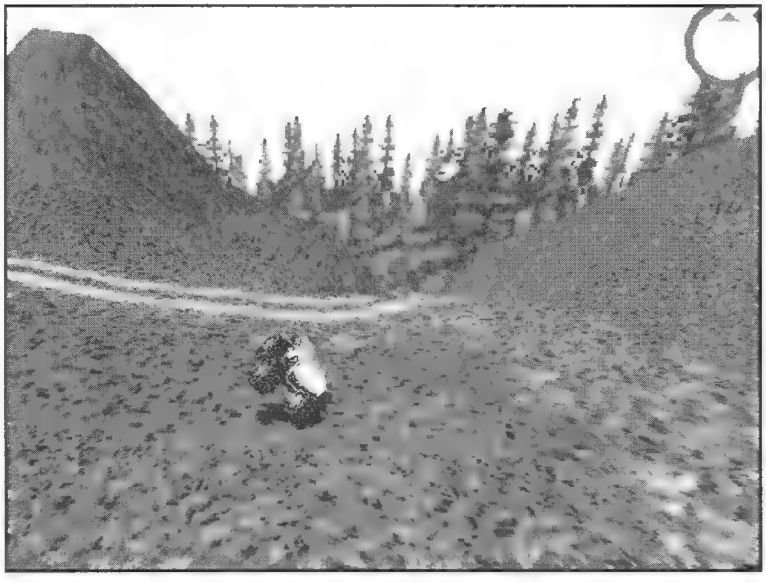
Straight drags: Use a deep tire cut on a straight drag for maximum traction, a high gear ratio for top speed, and a medium suspension for stability. Bring the gear ratio down to 1,800 or 1,900 for a tighter takeoff from the starting line.

J-style drag: For best traction on a J-style drag, you should have your gear set to 1,900 or 2,000, the tires on a medium cut, and the suspension on medium. Some drivers might want to use a deep tire cut, but those tires respond poorly on J turns.

The Monster Truck Physics Model

It's simple to become an all-around great driver. First, select a truck you like. Then take the beast out for a spin!





Getting one of these monsters up on two wheels is just one of the many tricks you can learn while adjusting to the different physics of each truck.

But while you're cutting doughnuts and knocking over outhouses, pay close attention to how the truck handles. To become a consistent winner in Monster Truck Madness, you must learn to "feel" the trucks' subtle nuances and reactions to the road. Otherwise, you can't make the adjustments that give you optimal performance. Each truck has some driving differences, so before you switch trucks because a vehicle doesn't drive the way you want it to, make sure you know exactly how that truck drives.

An experienced driver makes a connection with the truck and uses the information it gives to make subtle adjustments to the shocks and transmission. Customize the vehicle to complement your own driving style.

In short, don't switch from truck to truck after every race. Pick a truck you like and stick with it. Switching trucks can only confuse you as you try to learn each vehicle's slight physical variations. Wait until you find yourself consistently winning races with the same truck before you move on to experimenting with other vehicles.

Scoring

Two things matter in Monster Truck Madness—first-place finishes and points. In circuit races and road rallies, you need to go for that checkered flag first and worry about your point totals later. But in drag races and tournaments, it's the total number of points that determine the winner. Here's how scoring breaks down:

Drag Races

Drag racers in Monster Truck Madness are scored according to the official point system of Penda, the same organization that grades the pros. First, each truck must qualify for a position in the race, and **qualifying points** are awarded. The fastest time earns 100 points, second place earns 90, and so on, with 60 points going to racers finishing between fifth and eighth. The driver with the fastest non-qualifying time (in other words, ninth place) earns 50 points.

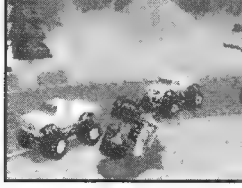
The winner of either of the two preliminary drag races earns **preliminary points:** 250 points for each victory. Losers earn 200 points just for showing up and staging. Only red-lighted drivers don't earn points.

Final points are awarded according to the number of trucks competing. If there are eight racers, the winner earns 350 points. With four trucks, the winner receives 300 points. And in a two-truck race, the winner gets 250 points. If you advance to the final drag race and lose, you still earn 200 points.

A perfect score for a race with eight trucks (a perfect score is less for drag races with fewer than eight trucks) would be 950 points, broken down this way:

Perfect Score

- 100 points for the fastest qualifying time
- 500 points for winning each of the two 250-point preliminary heats
- 350 points for winning the final race



Circuit Races

Circuit races award points in several ways: according to position through all the checkpoints, position completing all the laps, and position passing the finish line (see list below). Any driver who fails to pass one or more of the checkpoints receives no points for completing the race.

In addition, points are awarded to drivers who lead for an entire lap. A total of 100 points is awarded, but the points are divvied up according to the total number of laps. In a four-lap race, each lead driver would receive 25 points. A final 100-point bonus is given to the driver who posts the fastest lap.

To receive 1,100 points, a perfect circuit-race score, you must place first (900 points), lead every lap (100 points), and earn the fastest lap time (another 100 points).

Placing Points

- 900 points for first
- 700 points for second
- 500 points for third
- 400 points for fourth
- 300 points for fifth
- 200 points for sixth
- 150 points for seventh
- 100 points for eighth

Rally Races

As in circuit races, rally racers must pass through all the checkpoints to receive any placement points at all. Placement points are awarded according to position across the finish line. Another 500 points is divvied up among the drivers who post the fastest time between checkpoints. The points are divided by the number of checkpoints, so in a rally with five checkpoints, each person posting a fastest time would earn 100 points.

A perfect score in a rally race is 900 points—400 points for a first-place win and 500 points for recording the fastest time between each checkpoint.

Placing Points

- 400 points for first
- 300 points for second
- 250 points for third
- 200 points for fourth
- 175 points for fifth
- 150 points for sixth
- 125 points for seventh
- 100 points for eighth

Tournament Scoring

Tournaments are scored using the individual point systems for drag races, circuits, and rallies. Your overall points, however, depend on the number of events in which you participate. To see how you've done, visit the Hall of Fame by going to the Race menu and selecting Hall of Fame. The top dozen scorers are listed for each type of race and every track.

Chapter Three

Drivers' Education

As with any type of race, it's the lead driver who sets the pace, and, to a large degree, determines how the entire race is run. If you're a beginner, getting to the head of the pack might seem like an unreachable goal. But with a little practice and some refining of your driving techniques, you'll find yourself regularly placing in the top three—and if you're *really* good, winning races.

Here are some basic driving techniques, both offensive and defensive, that should help you shave precious seconds off your lap times and, ultimately, help you consistently win races.

The Starting Line

While it's important to get a good starting position in both rally and circuit racing so you don't have to fight for position or take unnecessary risks, it's equally important to grab that position as you're bolting off the starting line. Wasting time fighting for a position among the other trucks when you're just moving out of the gate only slows you down. Unless you have an opportunity to cut off another competitor easily and cause your opponents to wreck, you should worry more about getting ahead of the pack. Drag racing starts are a little different; they're covered in Chapter Four: Drag Racing.

The Super Start

Take a monster jump off the starting line by revving the engine so the tachometer borders on red. As the light turns green and Army Armstrong yells, "Go!," you jump off the starting line, and gain a minor lead on the

other trucks. Remember to keep your wheels straight and centered when you're firing out of the gate.

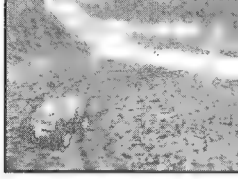
Quickly Gaining Speed

Bumping other trucks or "riding the curb" (hugging the edge of the road) severely hampers your ability to reach and maintain a good top speed. If you find yourself having difficulty, get ahead of the pack or let the pack move ahead of you. Either of these tactics helps you gain a quick top speed and easily catch up to the leaders. While it might seem obvious, remember that keeping the truck in a straight line and the accelerator to the floor are also essential in reaching top speed in the shortest amount of time. If you wreck or find yourself bumped off the track, quickly determine the shortest—and easiest—route to get back into the race. This might be as simple as jumping back on the track at the point where you left it or might involve finding a shortcut to make up lost time.

Shortcuts offer you a chance to gain ground on the leader or to increase the space between your truck and the trailing pack. See the Maps section in each racing chapter for information on the shortcuts on each Rally and Circuit track.

Shortcuts

In the Rally or Circuit mode, it doesn't matter how often or where your truck leaves the track as long as you pass through the checkpoints. Off-track shortcuts can be found on nearly every track between checkpoints. Finding these cross-country



shortcuts helps you stay ahead of the pack, and it also gives you a much-needed lead on the other competitors. In the chapters that cover the Rally and Circuit tracks we show you many of the best shortcuts as we describe strategies and tactics for each race.

Tip: Hooking Up
It may seem obvious, but it's important to remember that when your wheels are in the air, they're not "hooking up" with the ground and "making power." While jumping is fun, keep your truck on the ground as much as possible so the wheels can build momentum. Also use a medium or deep tire cut to increase your traction. (You can see the dust kicking up and the truck rocket forward when your tires bite into the course.)

Computer AI

The computer Artificial Intelligence (AI) directly reacts to your driving style and the skill level you've selected. If you've chosen the Rookie or Intermediate skill level and you're falling behind, the trucks actually slow down sometimes and spread out to wait for you to catch up. On the Professional skill level, each computer opponent has a single purpose: win the race and destroy anything that gets in the way. These drivers are, for lack of a better word, *ruthless*, and you must be just as bold.

Offensive Driving Techniques

Although these tips are based on actual racing techniques used by monster truck drivers, they can be modified to suit your own driving style. To get the best results, however, you should try to perform the technique just the way the pros do it.

Cutting the Corner

On tracks such as A Crazy Eight and the Yucatan Adventure, several corners can be easily cut to gain on a lead driver or, if you're already in front, put some distance between your truck and the rest of the pack. Cut a corner by turning early into the corner at top speed. Because the trucks were built for off-roading, you'll likely find it easier to turn on a grassy

Cut a corner by turning into the curve early and making a beeline for the next checkpoint or just an opening where you can safely reenter the course.

or muddy surface than on the road.

The only exception is when the corner is situated on a hilly stretch. In that case, reduce your speed and take the turn. It's better to get through the turn than to take a chance of going over a hill and wrecking.

Packing Your Dirt

In a real monster-truck race, the course surface becomes loose or "unpacked," depending on the length and number of races. However, Monster Truck Madness doesn't simulate changing track conditions. An unpacked surface, such as Mud Pies, starts loose and stays loose. A packed surface like Arizona starts packed and stays packed. So while you don't have to worry about changing your tires before you race the same track again, you need to choose your tires accordingly the first time around.

More Bounce to the Ounce

Monster trucks are heavy, and when they hit the ground at 60 mph, they tend to bounce. The bounce is caused by the truck's weight constantly loading and unloading suspension stress into the shocks. When the shocks "take on," or load, the stress, they must also release it (unload). When this happens, your truck suddenly slings its body weight forward.

Take control by getting the truck and tires straightened out while the vehicle's still in the air, then hit the ground running, using the truck's body weight to your advantage.

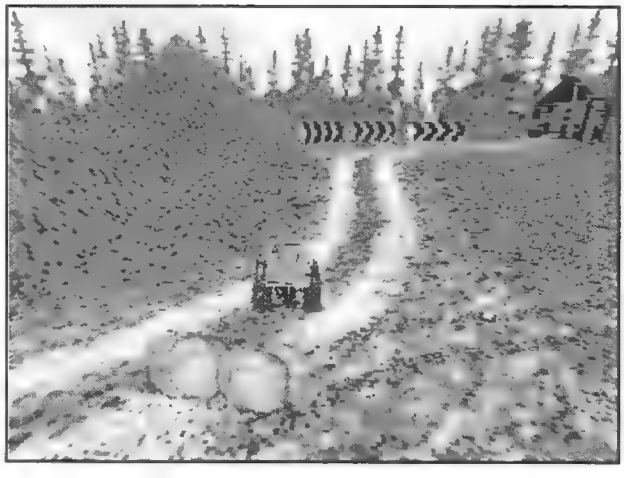
Turning Out of a Tip Over

If the truck begins to get away from you on a tight turn or over a rough stretch of road, correct the truck by turning in or out of the tip-over. Get a feel for the truck's center of gravity, and use it to keep the truck upright. Advanced drivers can also use the shock loads combined with this driving technique to counteract a tip-over. If you're still having problems on tight turns, try adjusting the steering responsiveness or tightening the suspension.

Power-Slides

Power-sliding, a driving technique borrowed from the NASCAR circuit, enables you to whip around sharp curves and corners without a drastic reduction of your top speed.

To power-slide, start into a curve at full speed. In the center of the curve, turn sharply in the direction the curve is going.



Now, as the truck begins to skid, accelerate out of the turn. Remember to keep the wheels straight, or you might lose control of the vehicle.

Power-sliding takes quite a bit of practice, but the time you save on turns is more than worth the time it takes to master the technique.

To perform a power-slide, start into a curve at a high speed. Slam on the brakes into the turn just before you snap the wheel to the right or left. As the truck begins to swing around, stomp the accelerator and zip out of the turn. If you begin to lose control of the vehicle, take your foot off the gas and straighten up the truck, turning out of the skid. Because of the truck's unique weight distribution, this trick is very difficult to execute—you'll probably find yourself fishtailing out of control the first few times you try it—but stick with it. You must learn the technique to master Monter Truck Madness.

Jumping

You encounter many different jump conditions in Tournaments as well as on Circuit and Rally tracks. The basic rules are the same no matter which course you're trying—take big jumps at top speed whenever possible. You don't have to worry too much about damage to your truck; these giants were built to take a pounding. A good jump in terrain racing gives you an advantage over the other racers.

Snake Bite takes a jump at top speed but without properly aligning the reentry. Now the driver needs additional time to get back on track—precious time he or she can't afford to waste.

But don't forget to keep your wheels straight! If you leave a ramp with your wheels turned, you

lose any advantage you gained by hitting the ramp at top speed. Turning your wheels or not hitting the ramp correctly seriously affects your truck's speed. And that rule applies to landing, too: keeping the wheels straight helps keep you from flipping when you touch down, allowing you to maintain a high speed.

Water Hazards

Water hazards slow down a truck more than any other obstacle. Keep your eyes peeled for paths that indicate where the shallow part of the hazard is, and use those routes whenever you can.

Water hazards slow drivers down more than any other obstacle on the course. They're possible to avoid, though, so look for ways around them.

The Helicopter

When you wreck, you can call for backup to bail you out. Press the H key on your keyboard, and a helicopter grabs your truck and puts it back on the track in an upright position. While it's tempting to resort to the helicopter after an accident, it can be time consuming to be hauled out of trouble, and you don't have many seconds to spare.

Instead of using the helicopter after a wreck, you're probably better off waiting a few seconds until your vehicle has come to a stop. In most instances, the game automatically resets your truck upright. If it's one of those rare times when you're stuck upside down like a turtle on its back, call the 'chopper.

A pterodactyl from the game Microsoft Hellbender occasionally replaces the helicopter and gives you a ride back to safety. Sorry, but this programming joke happens randomly and can't be controlled by the player.

The helicopter can help get you back on track, but use it only in an emergency.

Defensive Driving Techniques

The world of Microsoft Monster Truck Madness can be cruel at times, and you encounter a few piston-heads who would enjoy nothing more than seeing you smeared across the track like a grease spot. Defensive driving techniques can keep that from happening. Just because it's a game doesn't mean the trucks don't react like their real-life counterparts, so handle your truck carefully when you're pulling off these tricks. As we've said before, these techniques can be modified to suit your driving style as you gain experience. Our initial advice is for you to attempt the particular techniques in the ways we suggest.

The Bump and Roll

Tapping a competitor on the monster-truck circuit is so common that it's pretty much just another way to say hello, but bumping someone off the road is an entirely different matter. To bump a competitor, get as close as you can, but stay slightly to the left or right, depending on which side gives you the most maneuvering room. As your intended victim starts

into a turn, tap your accelerator hard and steer into his or her backside panel and rear bumper. The force of your blow combined with your competitor's beginning turn should cause him or her immediately to lose control and flip. If your competitor starts fishtailing and tries to recover, hit him or her again to finish the job.

While bumping the competition can cause other drivers to reconsider their aggressive driving practices, it can also put you in the fabled catbird seat. Here, you see a truck "nudging" out another driver to get a better position. When things get tough, there's nothing like mixing it up with the other trucks.

Pros call this technique "nudging out," making the truck lose traction, crash, and opening the lead for your truck It takes some practice, but when you learn this technique, it becomes second nature.

I Brake for Bozos

Of course, you're just as likely to be the bumpee as the bumper—but you're not defenseless. As your opponent begins to ride your bumper, quickly tap the brake and accelerate immediately. Computer-controlled trucks (and most aggressive human opponents) back off for a second and then speed up to try to bump you again. If that's the case, repeat the maneuver—except this time slam on the brakes instead of just tapping

them. The aggressive driver then either pulls up beside you and passes, or rides up on your rear bumper and loses control of his or her vehicle. If the same driver tries to pass you, be ready to sideswipe him or her into a bump and roll.

Guarding Against the Bump and Roll

Good defensive driving keeps your truck upright and your sanity in place...most of the time. One of the most basic techniques is defending against the bump and roll. To do this, keep an eye on any drivers who are close enough to try to bump you. If a driver starts bumping you and works his or her way up to your front corner, where the real bumping leverage is, brake quickly before you can be hit again. You could take a spill if you're not careful.

To drive Truckasaurus, the true monster of monster trucking—and the undisputed king of crush—type "trex" while in driving mode. Truckasaurus makes his course appearance on A Crazy Eight circuit, just off to the left of the first stretch of track.

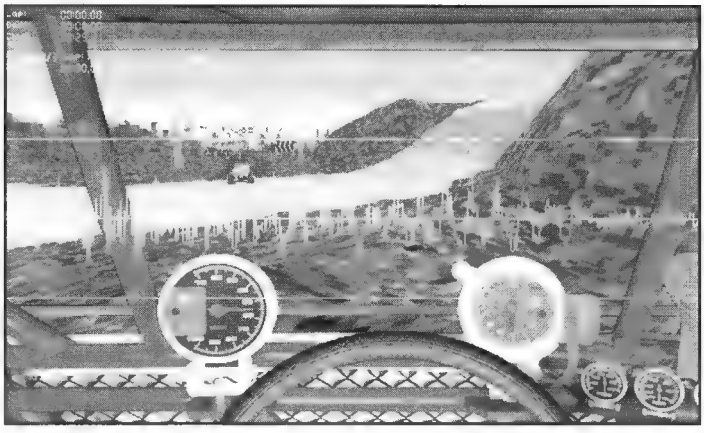
Neat Stuff

Monster Truck Madness, like most computer and video games, has a few "Easter Eggs" (hidden secrets) you can use to enhance the game—*if* you find them. These tricks won't work in multiplayer mode, but they're still fun and helpful for a solo player.

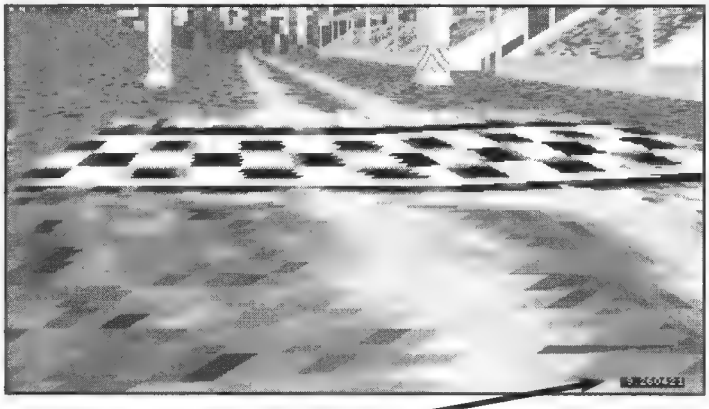
Automatic or Manual Transmission?

Choosing a vehicle in Microsoft Monster Truck Madness isn't that different from picking a car out on the showroom floor. You pick the style you want, choose manual or automatic transmission, and take a little test drive. The big difference is that you don't have to worry about a bank loan to pay off the sucker.

Auto Shift is the default setting transmission setting in Monster Truck Madness. To change to manual shift, open the Options pull-down menu from the Main Menu bar and select Game. Click the checked Auto Shift box under Driving Assistance to erase the checkmark, changing it to manual transmission. Click



Among the neat stuff Terminal Reality has includded is a digital-music synthesis system, which incorporates real-time mixing of up to 12 stereo channels in the game. Redbook audio was also added for digital sound effects such as Army Armstrong's voice and the truck noises. To see these noises as they're played, use the oscilloscope—the wave file that measures the different sounds. Type "dance" to display the oscilloscope.



To display the frame rate or animation speed at which your graphics are running, type "frame" while in the driving mode. The frame display appears in different areas of your screen, depending on your driving view.

again if you change your mind and want to go back to automatic shifting. Select OK to save your changes.

Since there are strengths and weaknesses associated with either manual or automatic transmission, your final decision depends on your own driving style.

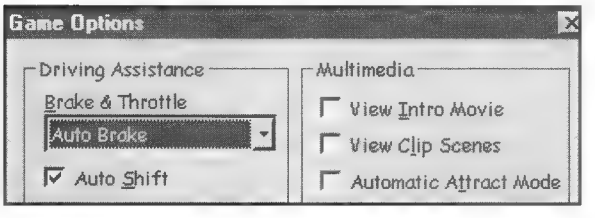
Automatic Transmission

If you're a rookie or intermediate driver (automatic transmission's not available at the pro skill level) and want Monster Truck Madness to feel more like an arcade game and less like a simulation, choose automatic transmission for your vehicle. It saves you the trouble of actually shifting gears and lets you concentrate on more important things—like driving.

There's no penalty for choosing automatic transmission, and opponents in a multiplayer game can't tell if you're using it or not. You can hear the gears changing, but all you need to do is floor the accelerator and go. Just remember to use the Down arrow keys (or other controller equivalent) if you need to shift to reverse.

Auto Brake and Auto Throttle

These options are self explanatory. When the auto brake is engaged, the computer slows down the truck for you. With auto throttle, the computer accelerates for you. They sound like great features—especially for rookies—but we don't recommend either one.



Driving Assistance in the Game Options dialog box allows you to customize your monster truck to your own driving style. Rookies should keep automatic transmission, but not necessarily auto brake and throttle.

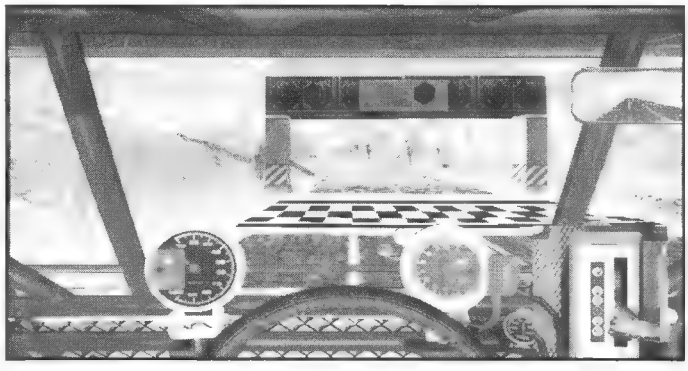
For one thing, you need to be in control of your vehicle at all times to become a really good driver and learn the nuances and handling of your truck or van. You just can't do that with auto brake and throttle. And if these options are active, you can't reverse. This can be a huge

problem if you're caught in a cul-de-sac or accidentally ram into a building or abutment. You have no other option than to call a helicopter to bail you out.

If you decide to use them (or change them), Auto Brake and Auto Throttle are accessed by opening the pull-down Options menu on the Main Menu bar. Select Game, and choose either Auto Brake, Auto Throttle and Brake, or None under Driving Assistance.

Manual Transmission

Because shifting gears is complex, Manual Transmission is recommended for advanced players only. If you're up to the challenge, expect the setup to be a difficult one to get used to, but stick with it and you'll be driving like a pro. Manual Transmission is all that's available if you're driving at the professional skill level.



In the Cockpit view, wait for the shift indicator to light up before manually shifting gears.

Shifting

You need to watch for a few things if you're using Manual Transmission. For starters, keep an eye on the tachometer, which indicates how many revolutions per minute (rpms) your engine's turning—in other words, how fast it's going. Ideally, you should shift gears when the engine is on the verge of, or just beyond 6,500 rpms. But don't worry if you miss the shift window—unlike a real monster trucks, you can't blow an engine in Monster Truck Madness; you just won't get maximum engine performance. Shifting gears at the appropriate time is crucial to maintaining your speed.

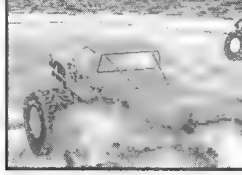
Your speed also depends on your gear ratio. If your gear ratio is set to a low gear, for instance, you get quick acceleration, the rpms climb

faster, and you must shift earlier. In this case, optimal shifting occurs between 6,000-7,000 rpms.

Drivers using the Cockpit view can also see a handy shift indicator light that comes on when it's time to shift gears.

If you're using Manual Transmission, you should learn your truck's limitations and shift gears before you "tach out" the engine. In addition, shifting too early causes your vehicle to lose any momentum it might have gained. And finally, don't forget to gear down until your truck comes to a halt, and then put it in park, briefly, before you throw the truck into reverse. It's annoying, but necessary.

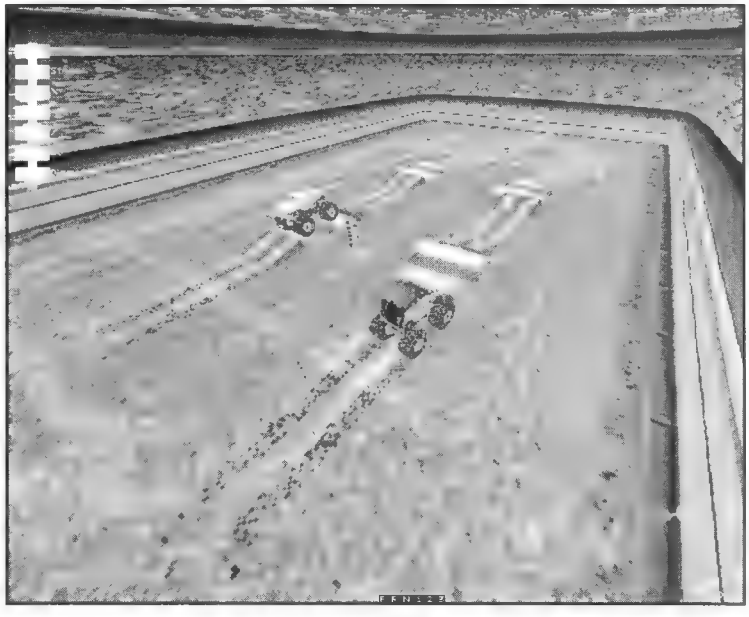
Chapter Four



Drag Racing

Drag racing was added to the monster truck lineup in 1987 when screaming fans demanded to see the giant trucks do more than just crush cars. It was the first competitive attraction on the monster-truck tour. Even though these automotive giants don't have the lightning speed of drag-racing funny cars, they still get the job done.

Boasting amazing power and blazing speed (especially when you consider their size), monster trucks put on quite a show under the bright arena lights. Everything here is about speed and timing—you can win or lose a race in a split second because a race doesn't last much more than a few seconds.



Screaming down a short track behind the wheel of a ton of metal and rubber is what monster trucking is all about!

But there's more to drag racing than just incredible speed. Power is nothing without control; if you can't keep your truck in check during

the staging of a race or the actual competition, you could be disqualified, losing points and dropping in the standings.

Drag-racing monster trucks takes two basic forms. The first is a normal, straight drag with a 100-foot track and two sets of jumps. The second is a J-style drag, in which drivers follow a J-shaped course, beginning with a short straightaway that turns tightly into another parallel straightaway. You must also navigate three jumps in J-style courses such as the one found in the Tacoma Dome.

The Drag Racing Arenas

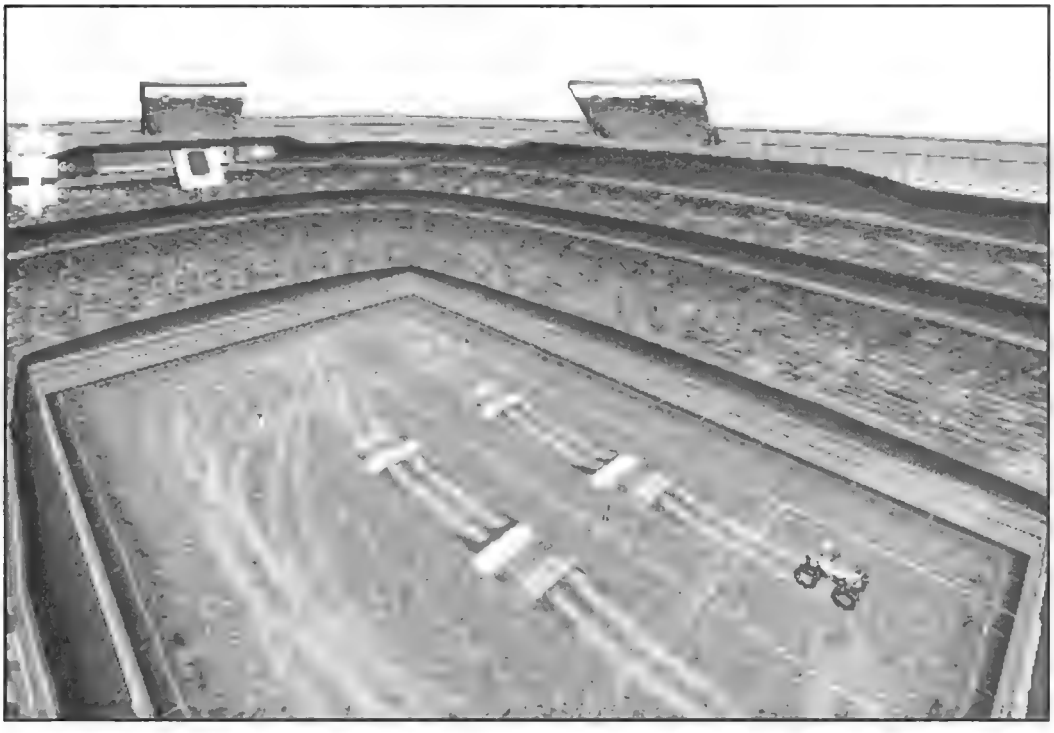
B.C. Place is a straight and simple indoor drag track located in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, that hosts a monster-truck

B.C. Place

Indiana State Fairgrounds

competition every February. Speed and power are the two prime requisites of this type of drag. The short strip has two "car crushes" your monster truck must jump in order to finish.

Indiana State Fairgrounds is another straight drag, slightly longer than the B.C. Place strip and located outdoors instead of indoors. The tour stops by the Indianapolis fairgrounds every September to rattle the nerves and windows of nearby neighbors. This drag boasts two distinctions: aside from being the oldest stop on the Penda Points Series, the Indiana State Fairgrounds claims to have one of the fastest straightaways of any outdoor track. On this track, speed and power are your friends—but they're also your enemies.

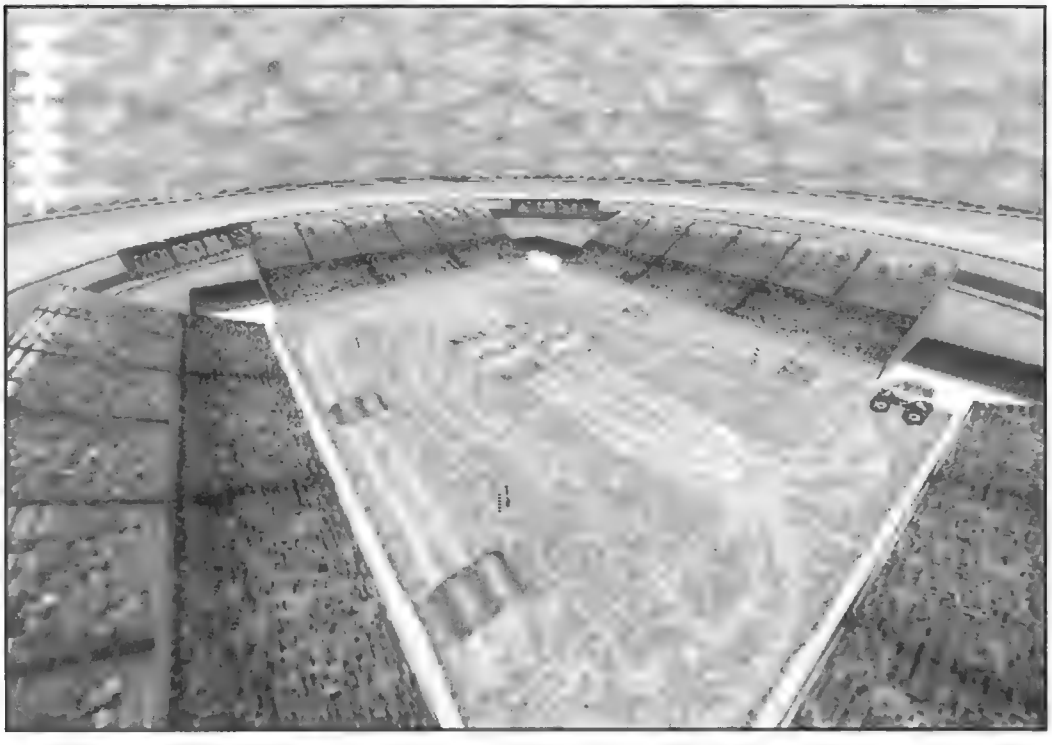


RCA Dome

The RCA Dome is also located in Indianapolis, IN. The fastest strip on the tour, it's a straight indoor track with two jumps. Spectators fill the venue to capacity during the winter months when the monster trucks stop by to rev their motors and wreak general havoc.

The Tacoma Dome is a J-style indoor track located in Tacoma, WA, with a signature bowl-shaped arena. Its nickname is "The Thunder Dome," and when the monster trucks come in January and the roar of the engines echoes through the halls, it's easy to see how the nickname got started.

The Trans World Dome is another J-style indoor track. Located in St. Louis, MO, it's the home of Bigfoot, one of the most popular trucks in



Tacoma Dome

the business. Car-crushing fanatics from miles around gather to cheer when the tour comes through every January.

Qualifying

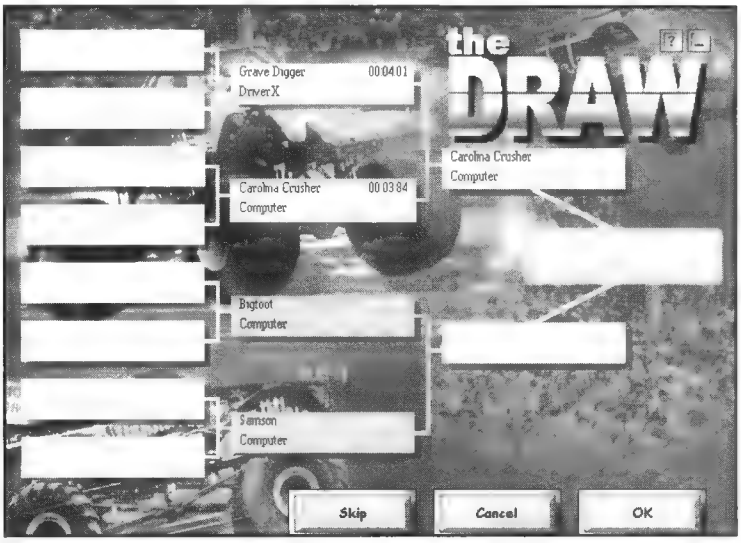
You must qualify for a place before you can take part in a drag race. But it's easy enough to do. Just choose a single competitor from the menu of available trucks, or select a number of rivals if you're up to the task. Because of the way drag racing is structured, you must have an equal number of drivers. So you must select an odd number of opponents, such as three, five, or seven.

Trans World Dome

Get Ready to Rumble

If you choose to compete in a drag race against more than one competitor, you must go through a process known as "the draw," which assigns competitive positions to each driver. Begin by setting a qualifying time on a closed drag strip. It's easy to concentrate because you don't have any competition. A fast enough qualifying time gives you lane choice and a good position when the actual draw begins and slower qualifiers compete against you. If you have a poor qualifying time, you don't get a lane choice, and your opponents get preference because of faster qualifying times. After you qualify—and depending on how many trucks you're up against—you might have to win several drags to earn the right to race in the final round.

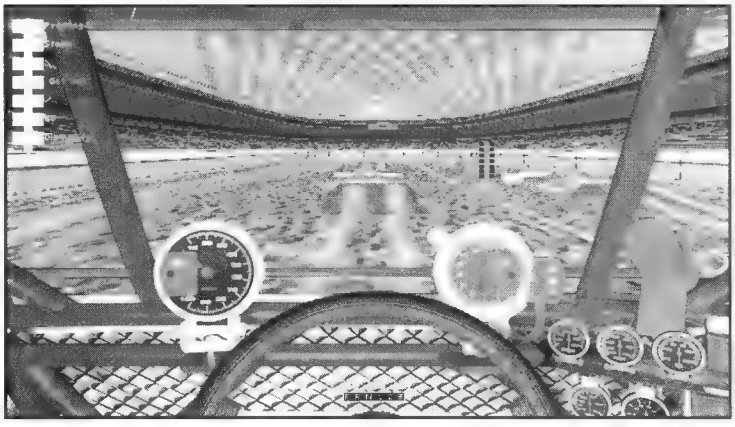
The Draw Screen



You don't have to watch races in which you're not a competitor if you click on Skip on the Draw screen.

After each drag or heat is run, the Draw screen displays the winner and loser, their times, and who they face next. If you're not in the next race, you can click on Skip on the Draw screen so you don't have to watch the drag. Naturally, you can't skip races in which you're participating. After each drag, the computer updates the standings so you know who's up next.

Staging



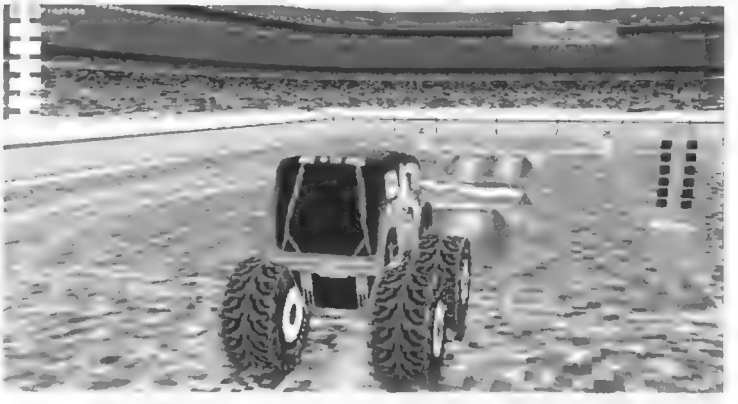
The Cockpit view obscures the staging line, so use the Blimp view to get a bird's-eye view.

Staging is an essential part of drag racing. How you set up your truck here helps determine the winner of the big race. Rookie drivers often find staging the most difficult aspect of drag racing.

To stage the truck yourself, switch to the

The Christmas Tree

In order to win drag races consistently, not only must you learn how to stage, but you must also learn to watch and react to the staging or starting light: the "Christmas Tree."



Pre-stage Light: *The first yellow light at the top of the tree illuminates when your front tires cross the pre-stage line.*

Main Stage Light: *The second yellow light goes on when your front tires cross the staging line. At this point your truck is just inches from an invisible beam, or starting line. If you bolt off the line or break the beam before a green, you risk disqualification. Once both pre-stage and stage lights are on for both trucks, the judge or starter activates the rest of the tree.*

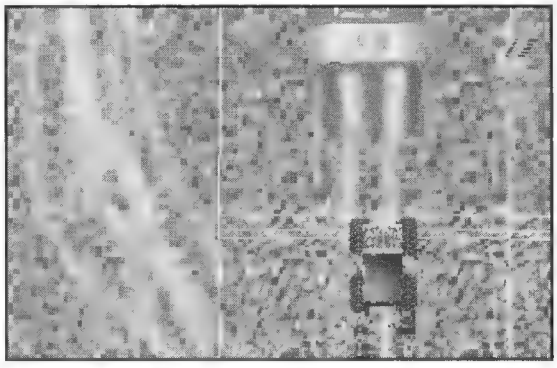
Amber Lights: *These lights flash together exactly one-half second before the green start light flashes.*

Green Start Light: *In all countries, in all languages, this means "GO!" When you see it, floor it.*

Red Light: *If you see this light, it means you've crossed the starting line before the green starting light was illuminated. Sorry, bud—you've been "red-lighted" and are disqualified from the race.*

Blimp view by pressing V and *slowly* creep up until the front wheel of your truck is just touching the nearest pre-stage line. Now roll forward to the next line—the starting line—and get ready. You have 30 seconds to stage. If you fail to stage or if you cross the starting line early and get red-lighted, you're disqualified from the race. Staging takes some trial and error to master, but eventually you'll handle it like a pro. Once you've staged, closely watch the Christmas Tree (see sidebar) for the light to go yellow and then green. To get your best jump off the starting line, try to anticipate when the green will flash.

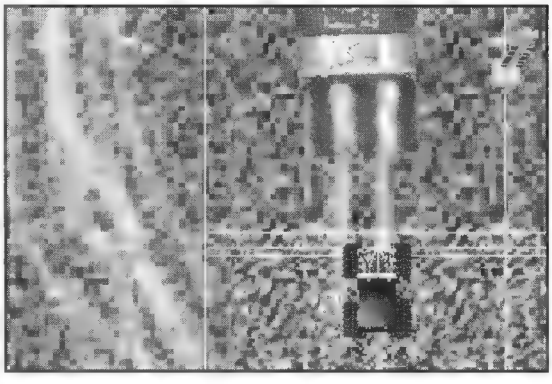
While there are several schools of thought on staging, you should—as with all racing techniques—use the tips provided to develop and hone your own skills and style.



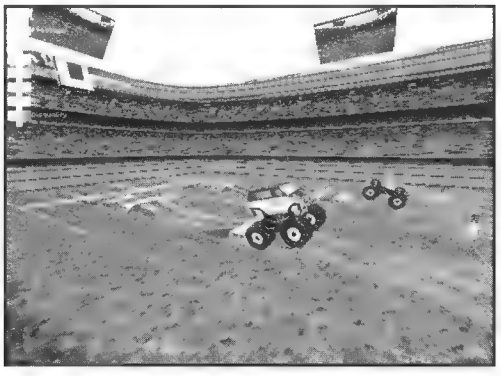
If you stage deeply, you have no room to build speed, a prime ingredient in monster truck drag racing.

Shallow Staging

Some professional drivers swear that shallow staging gives them an edge when they're drag racing. To shallow stage, stop your truck at the pre-stage line instead of going up to the starting line. You still break the invisible indicator beam that tells the judges you've staged correctly, and the staging light still illuminates. But by stopping at the first line, you've given yourself six vital inches to get a better "rollout" or head start. It doesn't sound like



Here we get a bird's-eye view of shallow staging. When shallow staging, you have a longer distance in which to build up speed.



Hit the jumps head on and keep your wheels straight to get maximum air and speed over the car ramps. On shorter ramps, select a truck with a short wheel base. Keeping your truck on the ground is crucial if you expect to get the maximum speed out of your truck.

much, but you ultimately have more room to build up speed and momentum. You can even start moving before the light turns green, just as long as you don't cross the starting line.

Deep Staging

Some drivers also swear by deep staging, but we're not sure exactly why. In this method, you edge as close to the starting line as you can without getting red-lighted. You're six inches in front of a shallow stager, but you're more likely to jump the gun and get disqualified. You also lack that extra bit of room to build speed.

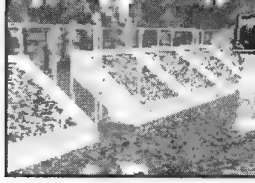
Automatic Staging

If you've tried and tried and still have trouble staging, use the Automatic Staging feature. Simply press the S key before your truck reaches the starting line, and your truck stages itself. Now all you have to do is keep your eye open for the green light and then floor it.

What a Drag!

You can be disqualified before or during a drag race for any number of reasons. For example, you're red-lighted if you don't stage within the allotted 30 seconds or if you fail to stage correctly. You're also disqualified if you cross the center line and enter any other driver's lane.

Chapter Five

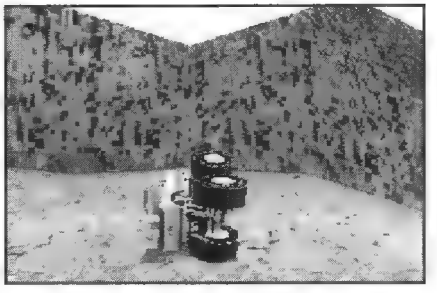


Circuit Racing

Nothing exemplifies the power and excitement of monster-truck racing more than circuit racing. Like NASCAR and Indy Car closed-track racing, monster truck circuit racing not only pits your driving skills against formidable competitors, but pits your mind against them as well. In a circuit race, driver and machine must become one in order to win.

To be victorious in circuit racing, it's not enough to pass everyone on the course; you must also know *when* and *where* to pass. On lap-based circuit races, leaders can lose valuable time and positioning because of a simple mistake. Anything from a wide, late turn to a brief glance away from the road can cost you the lead. That's why circuit racing demands your stamina, patience, and undivided attention. And did I mention you also must go faster than the other drivers?

If you think you're just outside a checkpoint, you still have a chance to make it. Checkpoints make a low beeping noise when you pass through them correctly, but sometimes you can get credit just by running into a checkpoint or sideswiping it. Listen for the beep to make sure you get credit.



Can't keep your ride on four wheels? Maybe this will help. When you feel the truck begin to flip, steer toward the direction of the roll. Sometimes Army yells "lean into it" as a warning.

Great lap times give you bragging rights and almost always put you in the Winners Circle.

The Lead and Back indicators on the Pitboard tell you how far you are from your nearest opponents.

Requirements

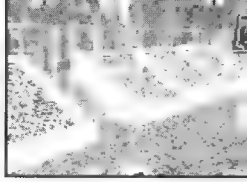
By definition, circuit racing is a lap-based competition of between 1 and 20 laps. (Basic races are 10 laps.) The primary goal, naturally, is to secure and hold a first-place position. You must also pass through checkpoints placed along the track in order to get any credit for the race, whether you finish in first or last place. If you miss a checkpoint, you must turn around and go back through it or face the humiliation of being disqualified.

Lap Times

Lap times are important—a series of consistently good ones can win you the race or even earn you a spot in the Monster Truck Hall of Fame. The game continues for one minute after the leader crosses the finish line; drivers can better their own lap times within this limit.

Reading the Pitboard

Once you've started a race, the Pitboard can be displayed in the top left-hand corner of the screen by pressing the O key. The Pitboard displays a Lap clock that shows the times for your best lap, the current lap, your overall time for the race, and the leader's overall time in the format MM:SS:Tenths (meaning minutes, seconds, and tenths of seconds). The time display next to "Best" provides the time and pace for your best lap. Clock displays your



overall time in this race. Place is your current position relative to competitors. Lap shows the lap you're presently in. The last entry displays the amount of time between you and your closest competitor at your current speed. If you're in first place, this last entry is labeled Lead. If you're behind, it reads Back.

Tip: *A maximum of eight trucks can compete in each race. But in actual game play, if you choose more than three or so, game quality rapidly degrades. If the game seems to be running more slowly or if the graphics seem choppy on your computer—especially if you're using a 486 or early Pentium—try playing with fewer trucks.*

The Garage

You enter the garage by clicking Garage on the Circuit main menu. This is where you can customize your truck for each race. Refer to Chapter Two: The Monster Trucks for a complete list of recommended vehicle configurations for each track.

The Circuits

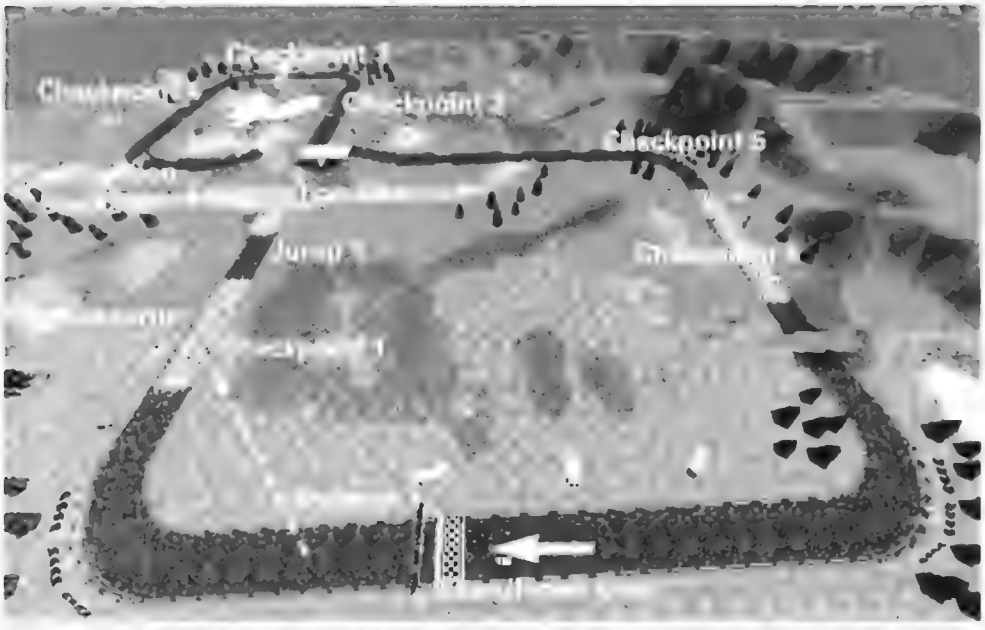
The Circuit option in Microsoft Monster Truck Madness offers a variety of racing locales. Here's a look at each one, complete with a pit report and complete walk-through. Refer to the maps for additional tips—and locations of the all-important shortcuts. Practice each run to get familiar with the track and your truck's performance.

Tip: *Before you begin a new race, you might want to select Zoom from the track-selection box for a quick overview of the track. The Zoom feature gives you an overhead view of the track and a short track description. If you haven't raced a circuit before, the Tips feature takes you to the in-game manual and provides a few beginning hints for rookies.*

A Crazy Eight

Pit Report: This high-speed track has several long, flat straightaways; two jumps; and a construction site that runs directly through the center of the course. Because it's flat, the track offers great opportunities to cut corners, take shortcuts—and make great lap times. Watch out for the hay bales on the corners and try to use the

A Crazy Eight



Start/Finish Line: *From the start, get on the gas and head for Checkpoint 1.*
Truckasaurus: *You can drive the big car-eating monster just off to the left of Checkpoint 1 by typing "trex," on any track, at any time during game play.*
Shortcut 1: *Cut across the corner and a make a bee-line for Checkpoint 1.*
Jump 1: *Take the first jump on A Crazy Eight at top speed and keep trucking down the straightaway.*
Construction Blockade: *Blast through this road block and keep flying toward the jump over the construction site.*
Construction Site: *Avoid hitting the backhoes and bulldozers. They stop you dead in your tracks.*
Jump 2: *The second jump is a long, narrow jump that should keep you on your toes. Checkpoint 5 is just past the jump.*

shortcut through the construction site as often as possible. While it's a great course for a rookie, A Crazy Eight nonetheless demands the skill and prudence that come with experience. And don't forget to hit all six checkpoints.

Get the lead by grabbing the inside lane from the starting line—but don't try to be a hero. You have plenty of passing opportunities, so take it easy. Go as fast as you can if you get ahead of the pack early, but don't risk your good position with an accident.

Track Report: From the starting line, you move onto a short straightaway before your first turn—a sharp right—comes into view. Monster trucks tend to understeer, so slow down and cut the corner, accelerating toward the first checkpoint. Still accelerating, straighten up and get back on the road if you've skidded off so you can make the first checkpoint. Remember that cutting corners is legal, but missing the checkpoints is not.

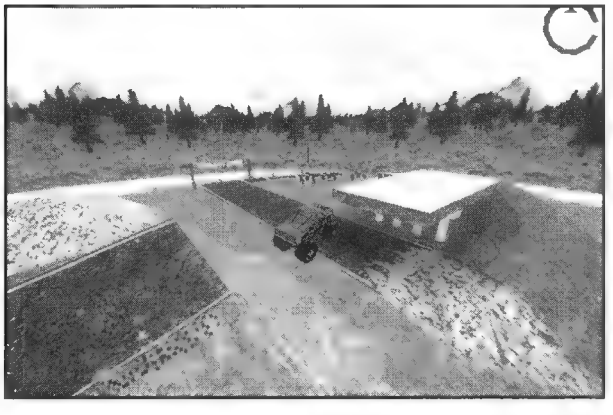
After you pass through the first checkpoint, get up to full speed in order to hit the first jump. Keep your truck straight going off the jump, and keep your wheels straight while you're in the air. You should still be at top speed when your truck hits the ground.

On the first jump, make sure you keep the wheels straight when your truck's in the air—turning them causes the truck to land badly.

In landing, stay away from the concrete pillars to the right that support the unfinished overpass. When you hit the ground, keep your vehicle in line and get ready for the second checkpoint, located just ahead. There's a sharp left-hand turn after the second checkpoint, so slow down and try to hug the inside curve as you start toward the third checkpoint.

Slowly begin to accelerate as you pass under a watchtower in anticipation of a left-hand turn. Don't go too fast—another sharp left is upcoming. Floor it as you pass through the fourth checkpoint on the brief straightaway, and then follow the dirt path around the construction site or take the shortcut through it. The fifth checkpoint is just ahead.

The construction site features a wonderfully "jumpable" unfinished overpass that runs directly through the center of the course. Try it out by breaking through the barrier to the left (just after the fourth checkpoint) and flooring the accelerator.



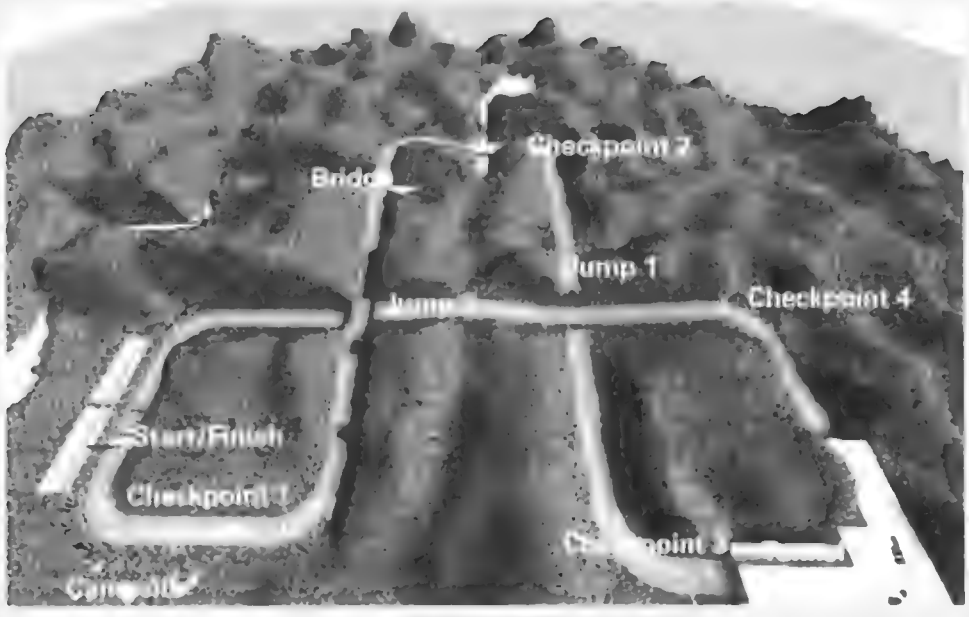
Keep your truck straight as you hit the incline, and continue to accelerate over the construction site jump.

After you go through the fifth checkpoint, slow down for a right-hand turn. Cut the corner and watch out for trees. Once you round the corner, the sixth checkpoint and a long straightaway are just ahead—just step on the gas and stay on the track. You go under a bridge and must maneuver a sharp right turn that lies at the end of the straightaway. It's difficult to cut the corner here because of all the trees, but you can bypass the corner entirely by taking the shortcut (see map). If you take the turn, go through the turn as fast as you can go without losing control of the truck. Then floor it along the final straightaway and head for the finish line.

Canyon Adventure

Pit Report: This is a narrow and difficult high-speed track that's not recommended for rookies. Steep walls on both sides of the track run the length of the course and make it difficult to cut corners and find shortcuts. Tight turns and

Canyon Adventure



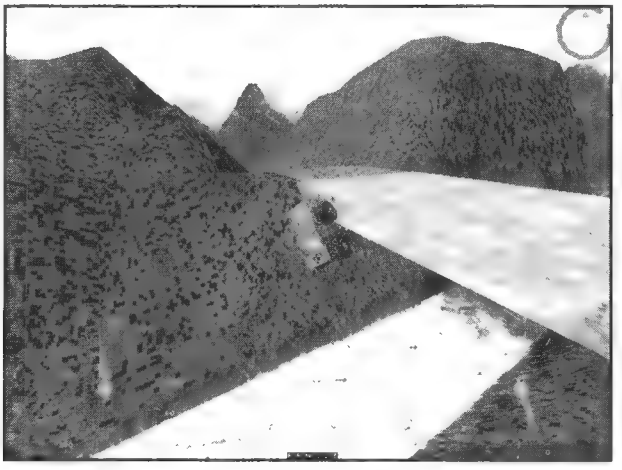
Campsite: *Use the RVs from this campsite to block other drivers.*

Bridge: *This bridge has no guardrail, and if you fall off the side, you must call for the whirlybird. So keep the truck centered when you're passing over it.*

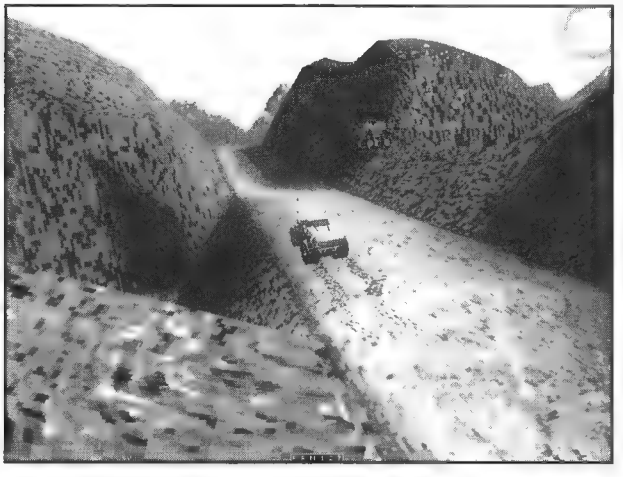
Jump 1: *You should have a minimum speed of 45 mph on this jump. Keep the truck straight and off the sides of the canyon walls.*

Tunnel: *This tunnel hides a nasty left turn, so take it at a reduced speed, then get back on the throttle.*

Jump 2: *It's important to keep your truck straight and under control on this long wide jump. Reduce your speed if you feel you're losing control of the truck.*



Cross bridges carefully and evenly. If you slip off, you must call a helicopter to get back on track.



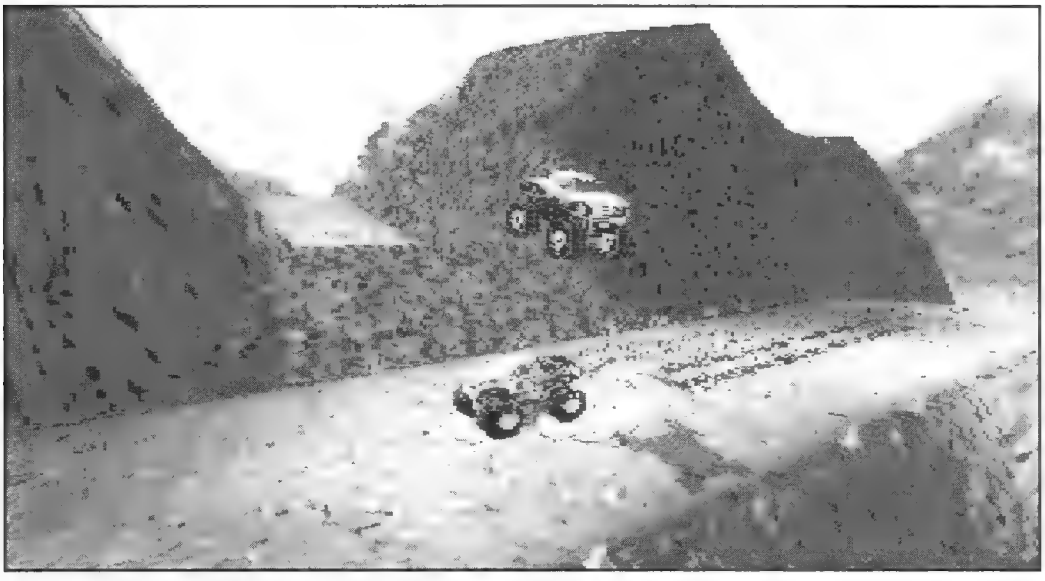
High-speed thrills and spills can be had on the straightaways. Keep control of your truck, though—you can easily flip while riding the steep walls.

hazardous jumps can cause trouble even for veteran drivers. It's the hands-down winner as the most difficult circuit and is dotted with four checkpoints and two malicious jumps.

Track Report: You don't have an opportunity to gain a lot of speed from the starting line because of an immediate sharp left. After rounding that corner, accelerate through the first checkpoint and around a slight curve to the left.

You can now begin to gain more speed while you climb a long, straight incline. Stay alert and don't slow down until a bridge comes into view. A sharp right turn is just ahead. Beyond the turn is another short straightaway leading down an incline and through the second checkpoint. Head down the straightaway at a minimum of 40 mph, but slow down if you need to for the tough right turn.

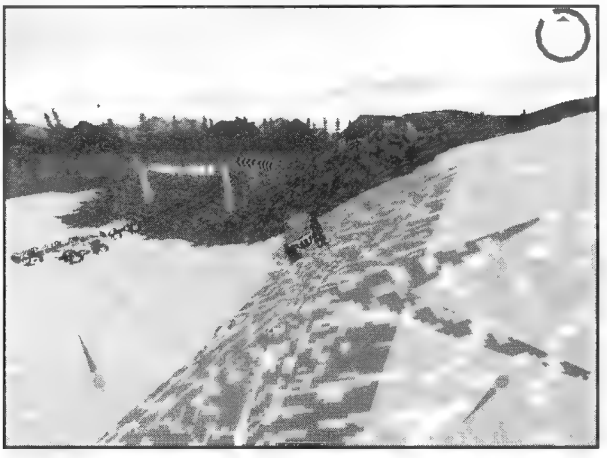
Once you've rounded the turn, step on it along this straightaway—one of the longest on the track. A wide jump is located midway down



This mammoth jump can offer up some awesome replays. The jump itself occurs as the last straightaway on Canyon Adventure crosses back over the first straightaway. As with all jumps in the game, keep your truck on an even keel when you hit it. If you're on the lower road (the first long straightaway after the first checkpoint) keep your eye on the road and don't let flying objects (like other trucks) distract you.

the straightaway, but you can hit it at full speed. Slow down when you hit the ground, however, because a sharp left turn is just ahead. Just past the turn is the third checkpoint and a tunnel. Keep your speed steady as you go inside, and be ready for a left-hand turn inside the tunnel. This turn is deceiving, so don't head into it too tightly.

Head for the fourth checkpoint just after the tunnel; it's to the left around a slight corner. After the checkpoint is another long straightway, so gun it and keep your eyes glued to the road for another wide jump. You need to be at or near top speed to make the jump, but don't forget to keep your truck straight and under control. This is a tough stretch and even professional computer competitors have difficulty with it. Be aggressive, but also be aware of the limits of your truck. Once you've made the sharp left after the jump, you should be able to see the stands marking the finish line. Take the final left, and speed to the end of the track.



Looking for a better way through the water hazard located just after the first turn? Use the marshy hill to the right—plowing down that trail doesn't slow you down as much as powering through the water.

Once you've passed the water hazard, quickly turn left to make it to the other side, and then turn quickly back to the left to make the first checkpoint.

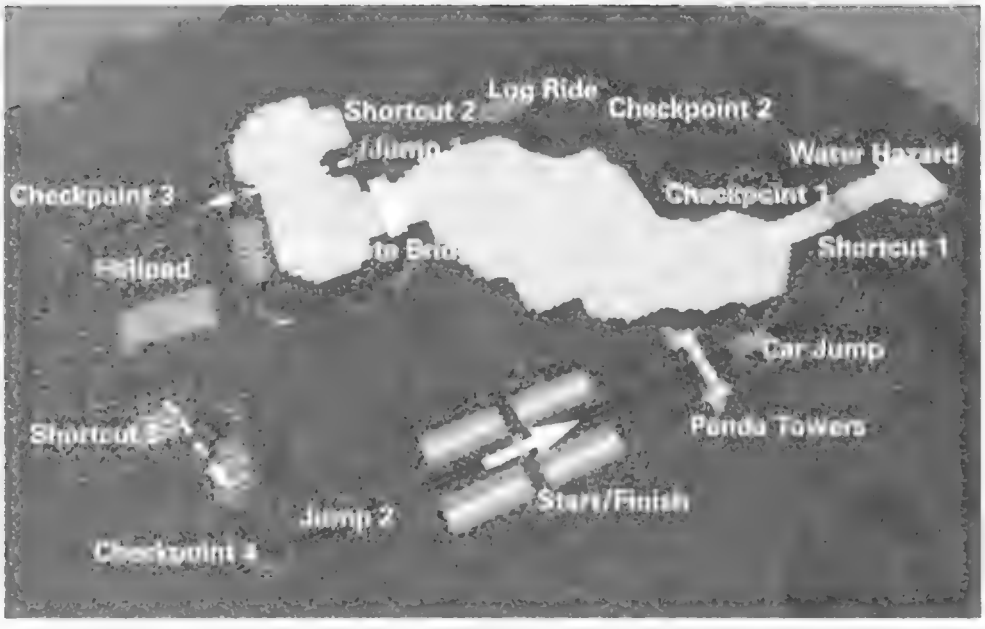
Mud Pies

Pit Report: This track might be short, but it's still challenging enough for even the best drivers. Mud Pies is a dirty, dangerous, no-frills track with a variety of obstacles and water hazards. Want to get immersed in the driving experience? Give this one a try and, as the saying goes, what can go wrong *will* go wrong. You must make four checkpoints as well as traverse a small water hazard and several jumps that can try the patience of even the most experienced driver.

Track Report: A straightaway after the starting line gives you a great opportunity to try top speed. You pass a watchtower and go over a jump along the way. It's important to keep your vehicle straight and level through this stretch and to watch out for your competitors. Even a slight jump can cause you trouble.

Prepare to slow down after the jump to make the slight left up ahead. Now you can see a water hazard and the first checkpoint. The water slows you

Mud Pies



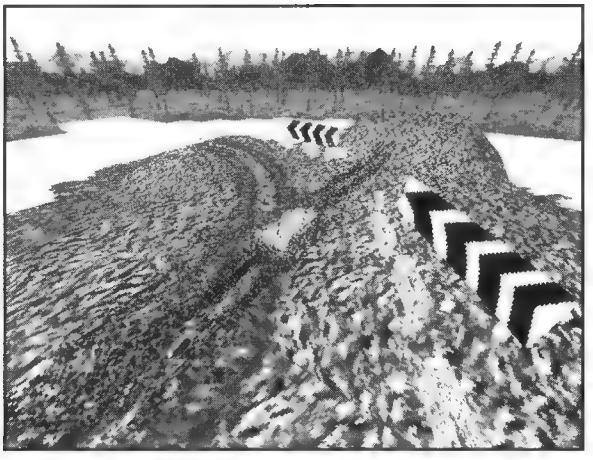
Car Jump: *Take this short car jump at full speed. Stay on the throttle and keep after the other drivers.*

Shortcut 1: *This really isn't a shortcut, but it's a good way to avoid the water hazard. When you come off the shortcut on the other side, steer the truck down the hill so you can hit Checkpoint 1.*

Shortcut 2/Jump 1: *Shoot the opening between the hay bales and take this jump at full speed. If you do it correctly, you land on the ground running and are just in front of Checkpoint 3.*

Shortcut 3: *Go at checkpoint 4 directly and cut straight through the rocky obstacles.*

Jump 2: *Coming out of the curve, straighten up and take the jump at full speed. You'll be flying to the finish!*



This shortcut is located just beyond the second checkpoint. Shoot the gap between the hay bales and the barriers, and then hit the ramp going as fast as you can.

Rocket over the water obstacle at full speed and aim for the peninsula on the other side. If you hit the jump correctly, you have enough speed to clear the water entirely and land on the other side. The third checkpoint should be directly ahead.

down, but try to regain some speed through the checkpoint. Now the road weaves left and then right. You have plenty of room to cut corners and gain speed through this hilly section. Pass through the second checkpoint and slightly reduce your speed to get ready for the turnoff to the left.

You can floor it coming out of the turn through the next long straightaway, but keep it steady. Watch for an opening through the hay bales and barriers ahead—this is the shortcut to the next checkpoint.

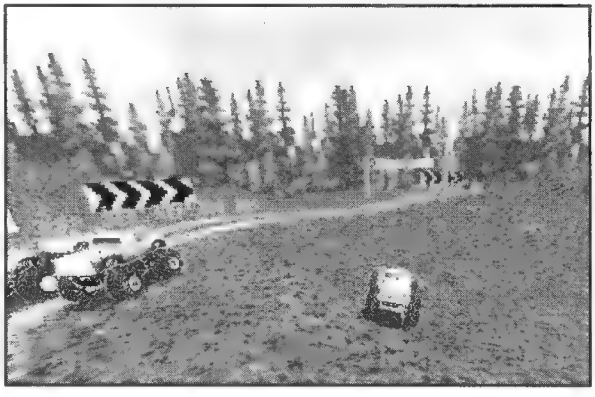
If you don't take the shortcut, follow the track past another left-hand turn and across a concrete bridge. Speed is important, but this stretch is dangerous. You need to take the bridge straight-on or risk falling off the side. A sharp right is just beyond the

bridge; accelerate out of the turn, around a slight curve to the right and over a log obstacle. The road turns left just beyond the logs—but don't cut this curve too tightly, or you'll hit the helicopter port. The third checkpoint is straight ahead. (The shortcut comes out right in front of the checkpoint.)

Once you've hit this checkpoint, take a slight left and gain some speed in the long straightaway. Large rocks placed along this section of track can be perilous, so stay in tight control of your truck. The track turns left and then right before leading to the fourth and final checkpoint. A slight left brings you into the homestretch—lay on the gas for a big jump, and then you're home free.

Round and Round

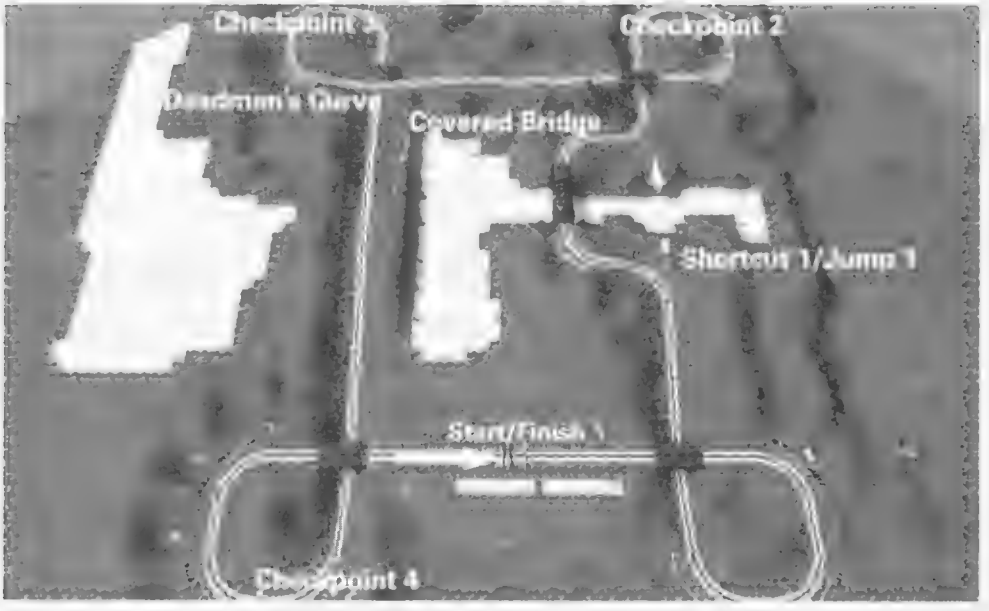
Pit Report: With long straightaways and grass-covered, unfriendly terrain, Round and Round is one of the biggest, most demanding tracks on the circuit. The track is great for cutting corners and total off-roading, but it's easy to get carried away on the high-speed stretches. You don't want to go so fast that you miss one of the four checkpoints.



You've got an excellent opportunity to smoke the rest of the pack on the first turn. To make it happen, cut the corner early and run for the first checkpoint, staying on the throttle through the entire turn.

Track Report: The starting line is situated on a long straightaway, so accelerate hard out from the start and continue over the bridge. You're then met by a hard right that passes through the first checkpoint. The turn continues to the right and down an incline. Go under a bridge and straight back up another hill. A sharp left is located at the crest of the hill—as well as a shortcut leading over a gorge.

Round and Round



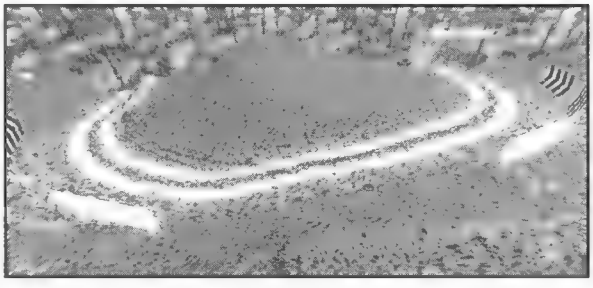
Start/Finish: *Go, go, go! Get on the gas and put some early distance between you and the rest of the pack.*

Shortcut 1/Jump 1: *Take this gravel jump to bypass a long U section and the covered bridge.*

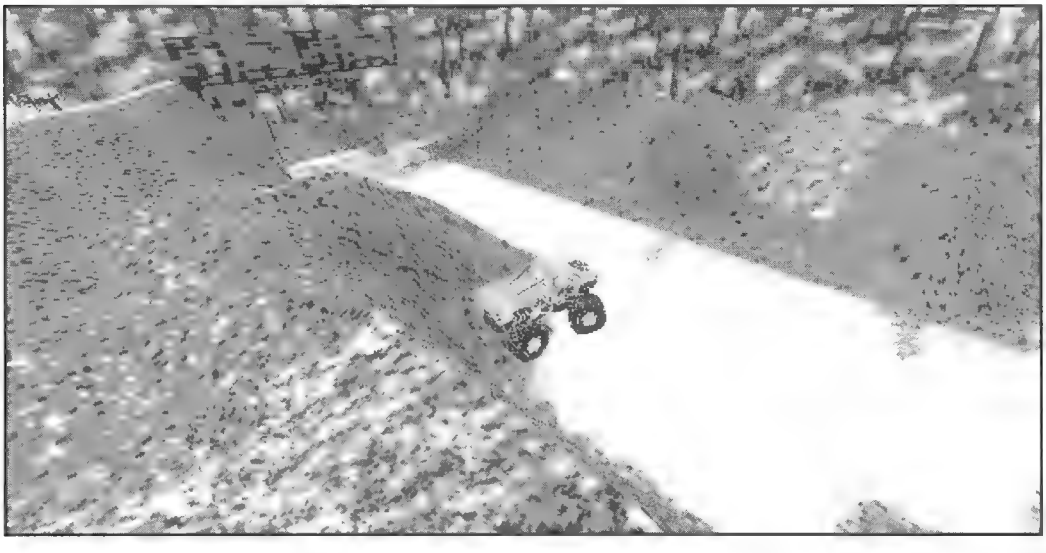
Deadman's Curve: *After coming out of the second turn, you should get on the gas. But slow down before you start up the incline to the third turn. If you don't, you rocket past the turn, over the ridge, and down a cliff.*

If you follow the track instead of taking the shortcut, you're traveling sharply left, but then you veer back to the right and across a covered bridge. The track curves sharply to the right after the bridge and goes down a hill. Watch your speed as you go up the other side—if you go too fast, you become airborne at the crest of the hill and jump past your next turn.

Take that right-hand turn and pass through the second



Round and Round gets its name from its brutally tight turns. From this wide view of a turn from the corner, you can see, though, that it's really just a wide hairpin. So don't be intimidated—try to take the turns at comfortable but controllable speeds.



This wide and exciting jump across a gorge is a highlight of the Round and Round track. Take the jump as fast as possible to ensure that you clear the gorge. When you hit the canyon lip, you'll be gaining speed down an incline.

This jump is difficult because you hit it coming out of a tight turn at a low speed. Try to line up with the ramp and stomp the gas, blasting off the jump at the last minute.

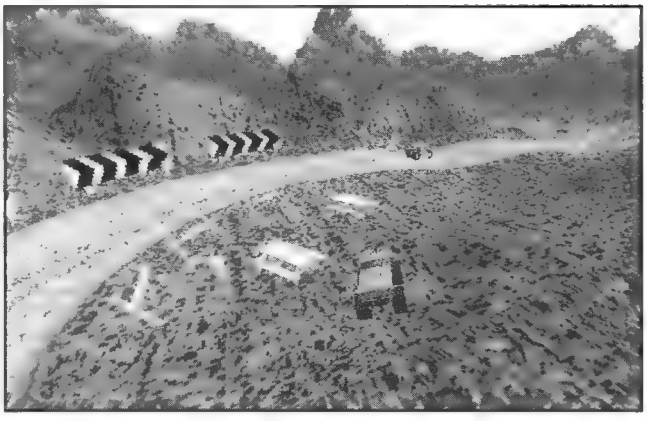
checkpoint. Then take a tight turn to the right and across another bridge to an extremely long straightaway. Take advantage of it by building up speed and putting the moves on your competition. The straightaway ends in a sharp right-hand curve. You should be traveling uphill at a fairly good clip, but don't go so fast that you miss the right-hand turn: if you overshoot the turn, you careen into the background, which you quickly discover drops off a shear cliff. If you fall down the cliff, you must call the helicopter and will most likely lose the race. After the third checkpoint comes a tight right-hand curve, and the track continues to curve to the right as it leads to a medium-sized jump from a flat ramp. You've probably slowed down in the curve, so quickly regain enough speed to make the jump.

Now you can relax on a long straightaway down an incline, under a bridge, and back uphill until the road turns to the right. Slow down so you don't become airborne, and don't jump past your turn. The fourth checkpoint is off to the right. After you've passed the final checkpoint, follow the road as it curves to the right and around and over a bridge. Once the bridge is behind you, floor it for the finish line.

Winding Way

Pit Report: Just as its name implies, this is a winding, aggravating dirt track that snakes its way around the McDowell Mountain Range. The track is relentless, and it demands your constant attention and your best driving techniques. And just in case you need a little pick-me-up, an enormous jump midway through the course throws you into Lake Evans. Winding Way has something for everybody—but not everybody can handle it. Be on the lookout for four checkpoints.

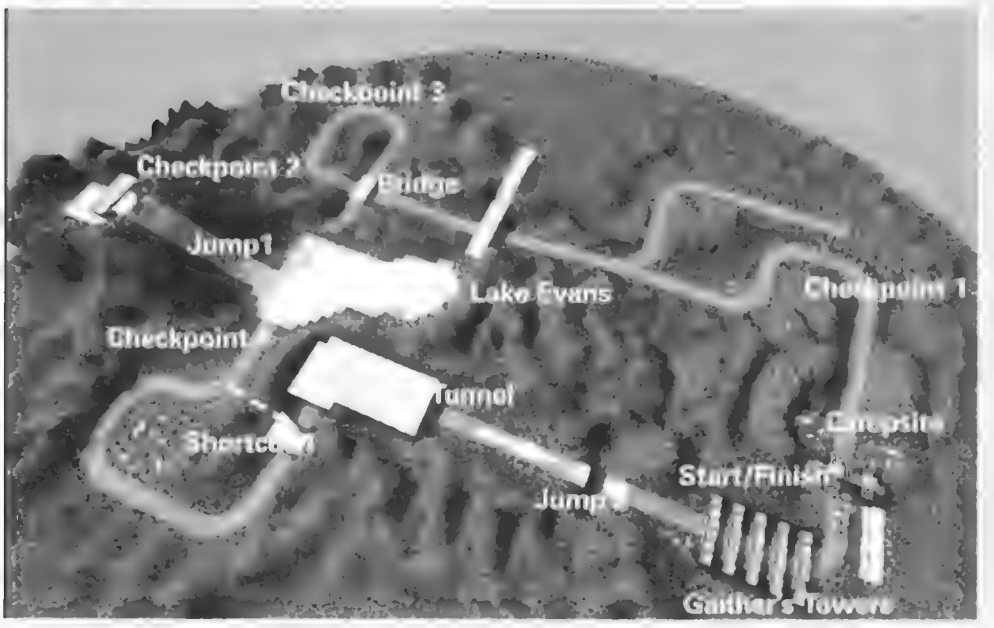
Track Report: When the green flag drops, a long straightaway off the starting line takes you up an incline and down the track. You've got a brief opportunity to get away from the rest of the pack. After a short climb, you round a tight left-hand curve, and the track continues to curve left through the first checkpoint. Try to bump other competitors off the cliff to



So the shortest distance between two points is a straight line? Prove it by cutting through this picnic area. You can shave seconds off your lap time and maybe even jump ahead of your opponent.

The third checkpoint and this curve are your cue to lay on the juice and get ready for the Lake Evans jump. You need a lot of speed, so come out the turn strong and keep your truck centered in the track.

Winding Way



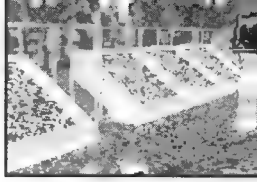
Bridge: *This is another bridge lacking guardrails, so keep the truck in the center of the road to avoid an accident.*

Jump 1: *A mammoth jump over Lake Evans highlights Winding Way. Take the jump at full speed and hold on!*

Shortcut 1: *After hitting Checkpoint 4, tear over the hill to the left and through the tunnel to save a few seconds on the clock.*

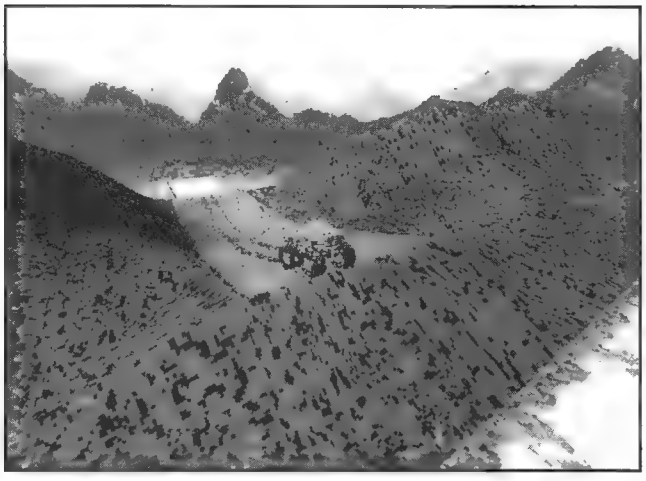
Tunnel: *A sharp right greets you as you enter the tunnel, so stay alert and maintain a safe speed.*

Jump 2: *The second and last jump on Winding Way is a small one, but you still need a good top speed.*

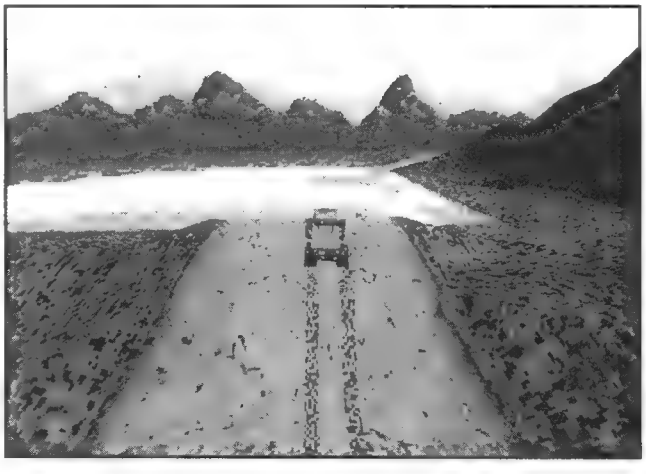


the right of the first checkpoint, but don't risk wrecking your own truck in the process.

After the checkpoint, head into the last bit of the curve. If you get bumped off the cliff to the right, use the access road to reenter the track and don't worry about climbing back up the hill, unless you missed the first checkpoint. If you've stayed on the course, the road begins to weave to the right. A shortcut (see map) takes you through the picnic area on the right. The track then continues straight and down a steep hill. You pass under a bridge as you continue down the hill, and then you climb a short hill toward the second checkpoint.

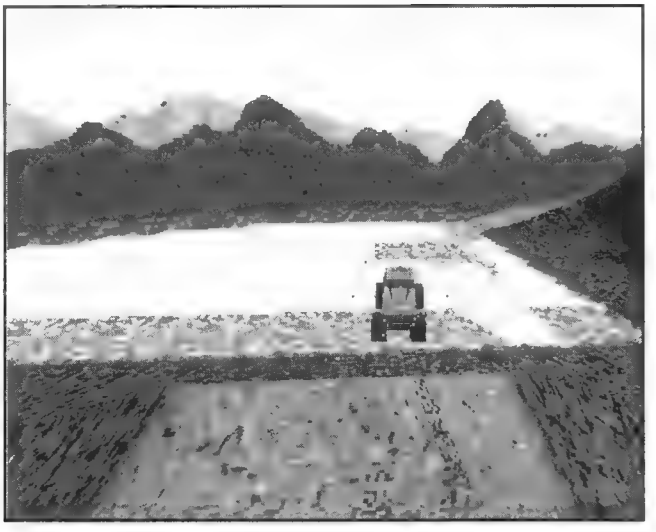


Hitting the Lake Evans jump ramp correctly is the absolute key to a successful landing.



Keep the truck straight and going full speed when you hit the ramp.

Now the road veers to the right, goes straight very briefly, and into a looped turn. The third checkpoint is situated just around this corner. The course curves right, takes you over a bridge and onto a short straightaway leading to the lake jump. You should get on the gas just past the third checkpoint and stay on it throughout this straightaway. You



The right way to hit the ramp.

The wrong way to hit the ramp.

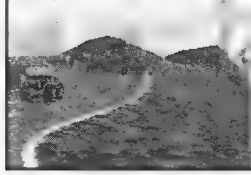
should be going at least 60 mph when the gray bridge comes into view.

Get ready for the jump by straightening up the truck and preparing for takeoff. Hit the jump in as straight and level a manner as you can. For a safer landing, try to glide the truck toward the marshy area just right of center, and keep an eye out for the fourth checkpoint, located across the lake. Hitting the jump correctly is crucial to getting maximum speed and distance off the ramp.

Once you've made it to the other side, you can take a shortcut just after you pass the fourth checkpoint, by jumping the hill to the left you cut off a wide turn and come back onto the course with the tunnel just ahead. If you stay on the course, follow the road after the fourth checkpoint as it gently zigzags right, left, and then through a campsite. Cut through camp to avoid the speed bumps scattered along the track.

The road then straightens briefly before it suddenly takes a sharp left and shoots you down an incline and into a tight tunnel. The tunnel takes an almost immediate sharp right, and then the road takes you through a straight hilly section and toward one last jump. Step on the gas and push the truck hard through the straightaway and onto the short, but exciting, jump. The track continues briefly through the Gaither's Towers and then takes a sharp left before ending at the finish line.

Chapter Six



Rally Racing

Rally racing monster trucks is about as straightforward as racing can get—make it from point A to point B...and make it there first.

Unlike lap-based circuit racing, there's no second or third lap in a rally. You've got only one chance to finish first. But like a circuit race, you must pass through checkpoints placed along the course to earn credit for the race. Shortcuts are legal, but missing the checkpoints is not. Luckily for you, however, it doesn't really matter *how* you get to a checkpoint, just as long as you do. Shortcuts and strong driving techniques are essential for winning rally races, and since the winner has to complete only one lap to grab the checkered flag, it's crucial to know where the finish line is and how far you are from it at all times. A good rally racer should stay behind the leader, keep a solid position, and blast

Monster trucks lend themselves quite well to the sport of rally racing because of the very nature of the vehicle. These monster trucks were especially designed for this kind of marathon off-road adventure.

past the leader just before the finish line to take the flag. There are several reasons why this is good advice. For example, the race leader is the first to attempt obstacles, and you can learn by his or her mistakes. Other drivers might start gunning for the leader, giving you an opportunity to sneak to the front unnoticed. Or the leader could just get comfortable with his or her position, let up on the gas for a breather, and never see you coming in the rearview mirror. Aggressive drivers might not like this strategy, but take it from us, it's smart to stay in the pack and wait to make your move.

There are drivers, however, who prefer to take the lead, put some distance between their truck and the rest of the pack, and never let up until the finish. You should experiment with both rally-racing techniques until you find a method that works best for you.

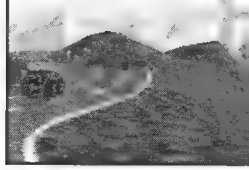
Requirements

A rally is a single-lap, go-for-broke competition stretching from point A to point B. Drivers have only one chance for a first-place position during a rally race. And you must pass through checkpoints placed along the course in order to place (and ultimately get credit) in the race.

Checkpoints keep drivers in check. Make 'em all or lose the race.

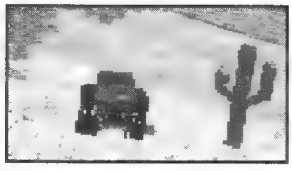
Checkpoints

Rally races, like circuit races, have checkpoints placed along the trail. Drivers must pass through these checkpoints in order to place at the finish line. If you miss a checkpoint, you must turn around and go back through it, or you won't be given credit for—or even place in—the race. The finish line doesn't count as a checkpoint. If your sound is turned on, you hear a beep when you satisfactorily pass a checkpoint.



Obstacles

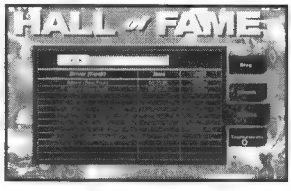
If you're already trailing the pack, a standing obstacle such as a building or tree can be your worst nightmare. Because you have only one chance to finish first, anything that slows you down can put you drastically behind. *Always* steer clear of any hazard.



Small obstacles like cactus and road signs are movable, but slow you down.

Lap Times

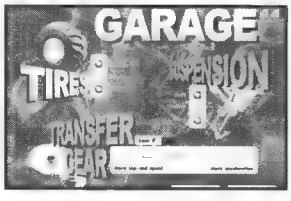
After the first-place finisher crosses the rally finish line, the other competitors have only ten seconds to complete the race and place. Good lap times can put you in the Monster Truck Hall of Fame.



Good lap times put you in the Hall of Fame.

The Garage

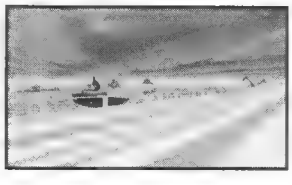
Enter the garage from the Rally Racing Main Menu. This is where you can adjust your truck according to the road conditions of the next rally. Refer to Chapter Two: The Monster Trucks for a complete list of truck configurations for each race.



Tweak your truck in the Garage.

The Rallies

Three challenging and exotic racing locales are offered on the Rally screen. The Pit Report for each one gives you a brief overview, and the Track Report supplies a complete walk-through of each course. Refer to the maps for additional tips and shortcut locations. You might need to take several runs to become accustomed to each course, but once you've familiarized yourself with them (and integrated our handy tips), consistently placing in the top two positions should be a piece of cake.



Here's a breathtaking view of the Yucatan Adventure.

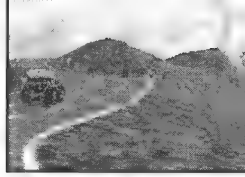
Arizona Rally Map 1

Start/Finish Line: *You start and finish the race from here. Use the wide-open straightaway to your advantage, cutting across country and getting an early lead on the other drivers.*

Shortcut 1: *Cut across these corners to shave precious seconds off your overall lap time.*

Shortcut 2: *Cutting behind the gas station saves you even more time.*

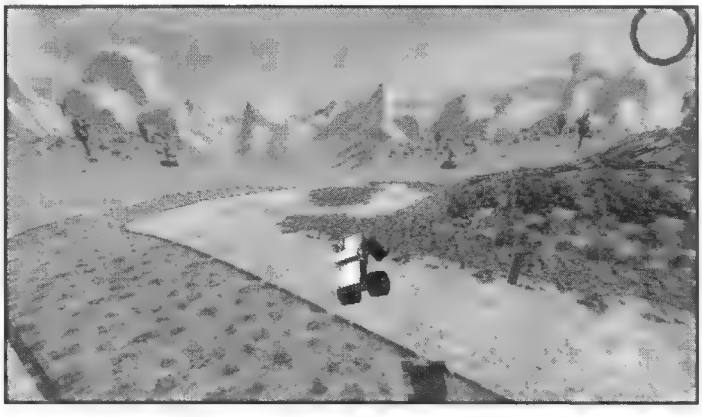
Gas Station: *If you follow the course, take this U corner wide to avoid the tanker truck and station.*



Arizona

Pay close attention to the ground when you're cutting corners. Sand is safe, but rocky and grassy surfaces can quickly and violently flip your truck.

Pit Report: The first part of the rally begins in the unforgiving Arizona desert. Use the overlay map to find the shortest line between two points if you decide to wander off course in search of shortcuts. Be careful—the rocky, uneven terrain can flip your four-wheeler in a heartbeat, so stay close to the main road and keep your truck under control. The second half of the course begins with a short jump over railroad tracks. Then you drive onto a four-lane highway that leads through the city and past the finish line. While the course *looks* easy, looks can be deceiving. Until you learn the course, take it slow through the last stretch. In addition to two railroad jumps, you must pass through six checkpoints.



Be careful reentering the course because of this steep incline. If you're going too fast, your truck can become airborne and flip. But don't give up a lead by slowing down too much.

Track Report: As the race begins, step on the gas and use the first couple of turns to put some distance between your truck and the other drivers. Instead of following the course (which takes a right-hand turn, then a left), cut across the course at an angle. Stay on sandy, even ground, and don't stray far from the trail. Use the overlay

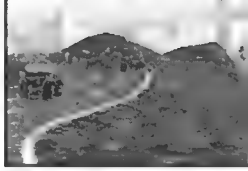
Arizona Rally Map 2

First Ghost Town: *Keep the gas pedal on the floor and power-slide through the first Ghost Town. Checkpoint 1 is just ahead, so keep the hammer down.*

Shortcut 2: *This shortcut isn't recommended because the buildings in the ghost town are tightly packed together. It's difficult to find an opening—you can still cut through if you think you're driver enough.*

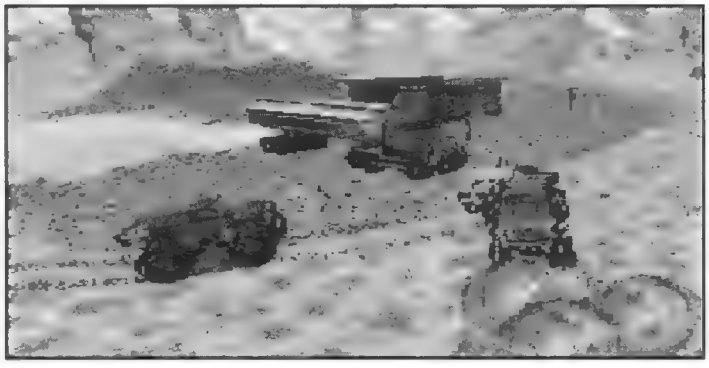
Second & Third Ghost Towns: *Keep trucking through these towns, too. If you try to shortcut around the towns, watch for sudden inclines or other obstacles that might cause your truck to become airborne. Covered wagons can be pushed onto the tracks as obstacles for other drivers.*

To Map 3: *We've eliminated a part of the course here that's nearly identical to the terrain you've just covered. It takes you through another ghost town and a short empty stretch of desert. You then come to the jump that begins Map 3.*



map to find the shortest distance to each of the checkpoints.

When the road turns back to the right, cut the corner early, basically making a beeline for the tanker truck as it comes into view. Bypass the turn that takes you around the gas station and go behind it instead. By now you should be slightly ahead of the other drivers. Once you've driven behind the gas station, turn left and return to the course. The path turns to the right, then to the left. Again, you should cut the corner, but be aware of your surroundings so you're not surprised by buildings or rocky patches of road. As the first ghost town comes into view, floor the accelerator in preparation for the brief straightaway just ahead. As you leave the ghost town, power-slide (see Chapter Three) around the right-hand turn or cut the corner. As the course turns left, stay on the gas through another ghost town and the first checkpoint.

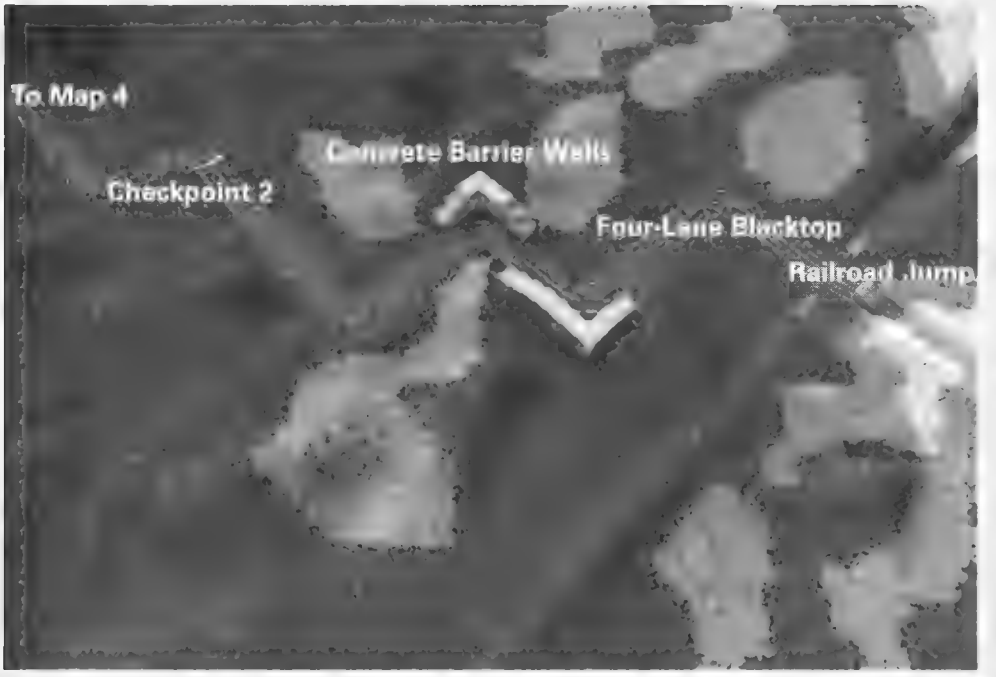


No time to fuel up—whiz by the gas station and keep the pedal to the floor.

High-tail it through the ghost town using power slides to cut sharp corners.

Just past the first checkpoint is yet another ghost town and a sharp right. Slow down, take the turn, and then get ready for a slight left. Use

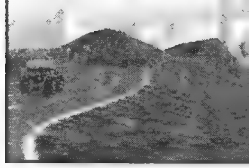
Arizona Rally Map 3



Railroad Jump: *This is a small tricky jump that's difficult to drive around, so stay sharp when you approach it. Once you've navigated past the jump, slow down and get ready for the sharp left. A potential shortcut behind the concrete barrier wall might seem appealing, but don't try it. The terrain here is deceiving, and trying to cut corners probably causes more trouble than they're worth.*

The Four-Lane Blacktop: *Hitting the four-lane wide open after the jump is a wake-up call for most drivers because the surface of the road is considerably different than the sandy Arizona desert.*

Concrete Barrier Walls: *Stone-hard, immovable objects can put a dent in your progress.*



the short straightaway to gain some speed, and follow the course around a tight left-hand turn. The course now turns to the right and shoots past another gas station. Your next turn is a left just past the gas station. Once you're through the last ghost town, the road straightens up.

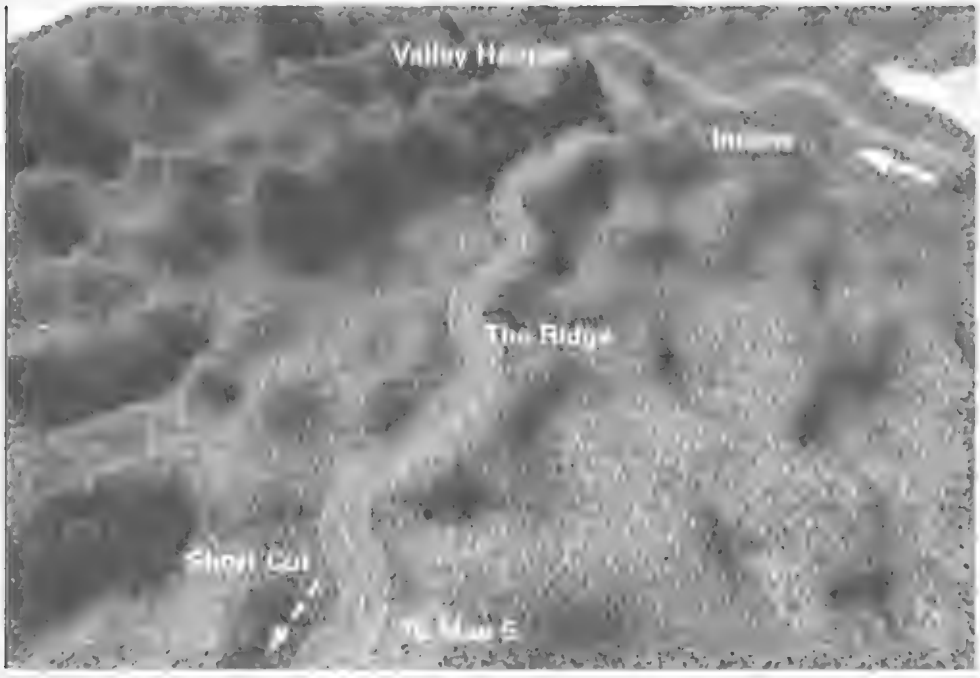
Stomp the gas and get ready for the railroad-track jump. The jump isn't very big, but it can still be tricky. If you misjudge the jump or get caught between the ramps on the railroad, you must call the helicopter to get you out, which costs you valuable lap time. You should hit the ramp straight on and keep your truck's wheels straight when you land. Once you're back on solid ground, hit the four-lane highway at full speed, but slow down momentarily for a tight left.

Now that you're on the back half of the course, which is filled with tight turns and concrete walls, you must closely watch your speed. For example, take the sharp right at the first

If you get caught behind the ghost town, squeeze through the alleys between the buildings to get back on track. It's a tight fit, but it's also a helpful shortcut.

For the jump over the railroad tracks, keep your truck straight and make sure you've got enough speed built up to propel your truck over the ramp.

Arizona Rally Map 4



The Incline: *This steep drive into the Arizona Valley can be a nightmare if you get off the course and tip over. So stay on course and focused.*

The Valley Hairpin: *A tight hairpin and other terrible turns keep things exciting through this stretch. Again, keep your attention on the road and your truck steady.*

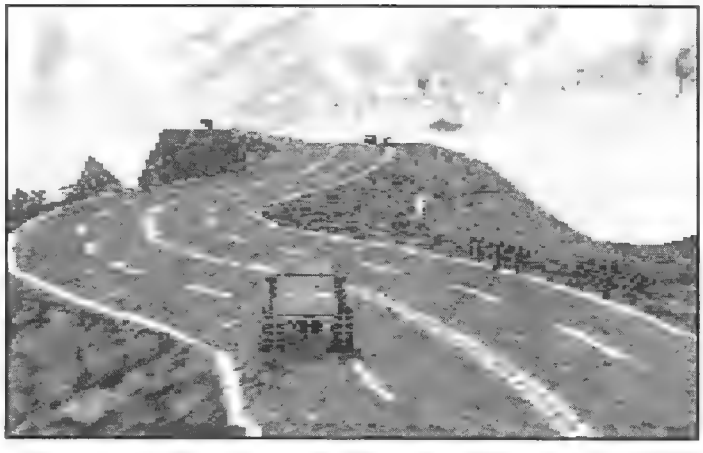
The Ridge: *Keep the truck in the center of the fourlanes. Slipping down the side of the ridge ruins your chances of winning the race.*

concrete wall at medium speed. The road turns back to the left and then takes another sharp right. Hit the gas on the short straightaway and whiz through the second checkpoint. The course continues left, then right.

Prepare for a hairpin turn to the left after you climb a short incline; sharply cut the turn and stay off the hill. The course continues to weave through the hills and onto a short straightaway. Travel the S-shaped ridge just beyond the straightaway with caution. Once the ridge is behind you, you continue to climb until you reach a sharp left-hand turn leading to a snaking stretch back down the incline.

As the road straightens out, resist the urge to go all out—this section of the course is deceiving, and

Unless you're brave enough to power slide around these turns, slow down to avoid slamming into the wall.



Slipping off the S-shaped ridge can cost you valuable seconds. Usually the only way to recover is to call in the helicopter.

Arizona Rally Map 5

Concrete Barrier Wall: *Reduce your speed before you get to this wall. It's a tight left-hand turn, so be prepared.*

Covered Concrete Tunnel: *The road weaves left and right in the tunnel. Stay alert and keep the truck away from the inside walls.*

Open Bridge: *Because this bridge has no guardrails or retaining walls, you must keep the truck under control and in the center of the road. If you fall over the side, you must call for a helicopter rescue.*

high speeds can cause your truck to become airborne. The road now zigzags right, then left. The third checkpoint is just ahead, but stay on the trail—trying to take a shortcut over the uneven grassy terrain can cause major headaches.

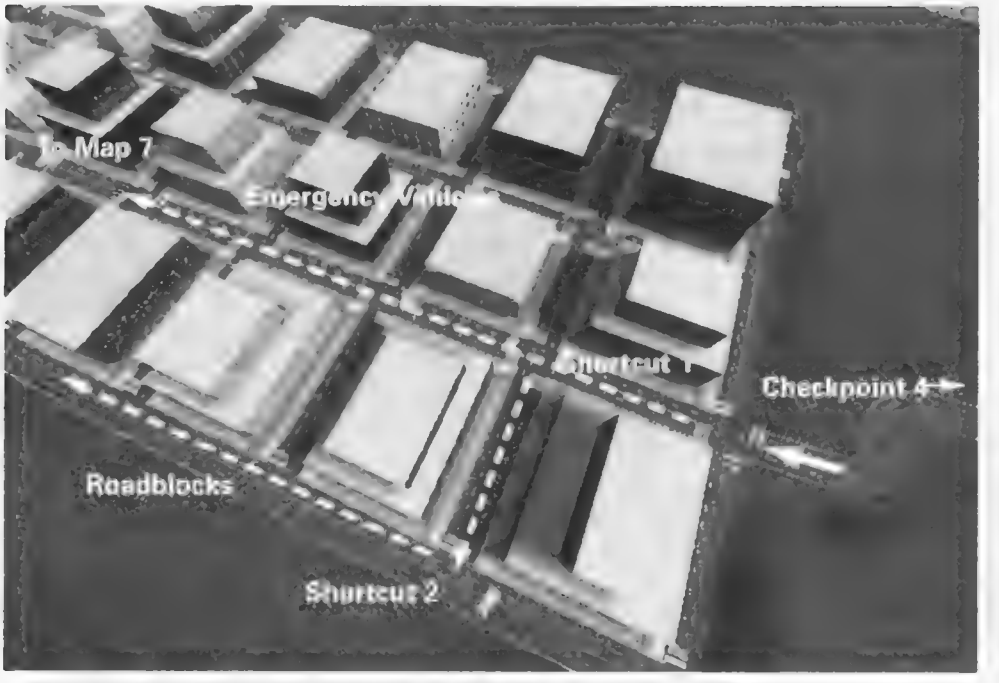
These cones before the third checkpoint indicate a shortcut off to the right. It's a bumpy ride, but it saves you a few seconds.

A tight left-hand turn follows the third checkpoint, and then the road zigzags again to the right and back to the left. You don't have much of an opportunity to gain speed in the short straightaway just ahead because of the concrete wall surrounding the next left-hand turn.

The course continues up another incline, all the while weaving back and forth through the mountains. Take a left into a tunnel, an immediate right leading down a steep slope and another hard left. Top speed isn't a high priority at this point—keeping your truck upright is. As you pass over a bridge, make sure your truck's straight and on track because the road takes a sharp right midway over. Now step on the accelerator to gain some speed for the jump ahead.

Once you've made it, go through the fourth checkpoint and into the homestretch. Follow the course into the city, watching your speed. Carefully navigate the maze of streets to get to the fifth checkpoint. The final checkpoint is just outside the city limits. You're a stone's throw from the finish line, located just over the ridge.

Arizona Rally Map 6

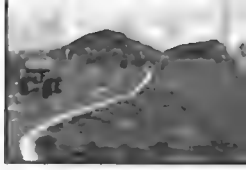


Checkpoint 4: *It's located after the second set of railroad tracks, just before you enter the city.*

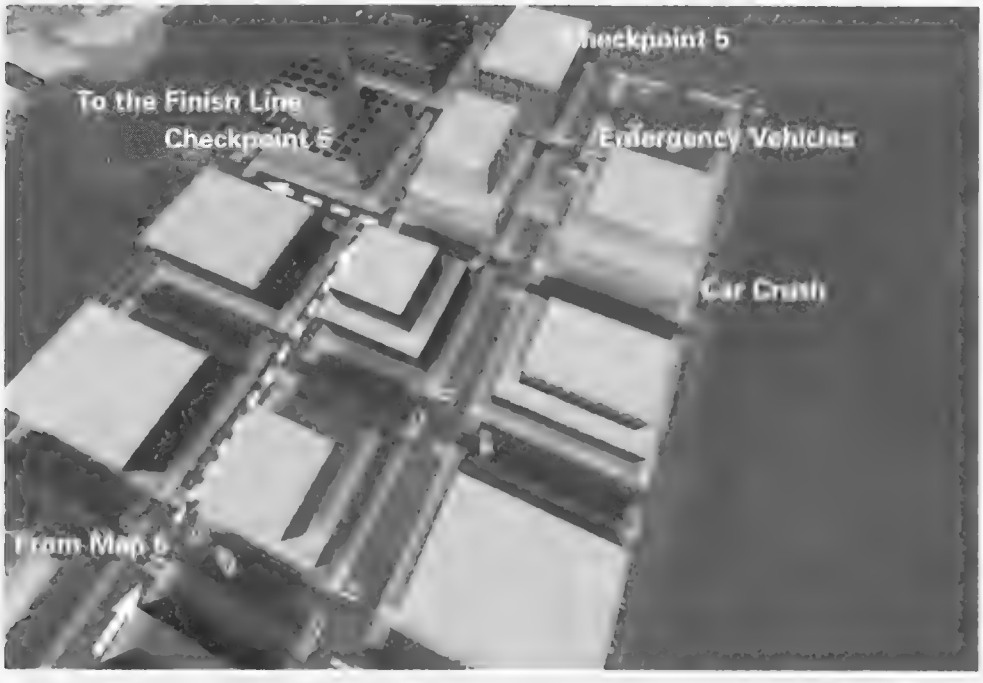
Emergency Vehicles: *These block your way. You can bump them out of the way or push them in front of competitors, but they're heavy and aren't really worth the time or effort.*

Roadblocks: *Crash through these and cut as many corners as you can to find the upcoming checkpoints quickly. Roadblocks aren't nearly as heavy as emergency vehicles and can be easily pushed aside.*

Shortcut 1 and 2: *You can take the main street all the way through the city, avoiding obstacles and blowing through roadblocks. Or you can take the street that leads to the left around the city. It's your choice—either shortcut helps you quickly hit the checkpoints.*



Arizona Rally Map 7



Car Crush: *Two unattended cars around the back side of the city are waiting to get squashed like bugs! While it's fun to demolish the cars, save the excitement for when you're not trying to win a rally.*

Emergency Vehicles: *In mutliplayer mode, you can push these trucks around the street to block other drivers.*

Highlands Rally

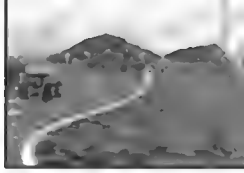
Pit Report: The Highlands Rally has two great distinctions. Aside from being the most aggravating rally course in Microsoft Monster Truck Madness, it's also the most difficult by far. With its twisting turns and confusing crossroads, this course doesn't just strip you of your patience, it takes your sanity, too!

The course begins on the outskirts of an old Scottish town and winds its way through a castle, several villages, and open farmland. You *do* have a choice about your route, though—as the song says, you can take the high road or the low road (see map for the "high road" shortcut). Shortcut or not, you still face uneven cobblestone streets, several water hazards, and five checkpoints. But your main concern should be the tight, unforgiving turns. Once you're accustomed to the course, you find yourself whipping through the shortcuts and straightaways at high speed.

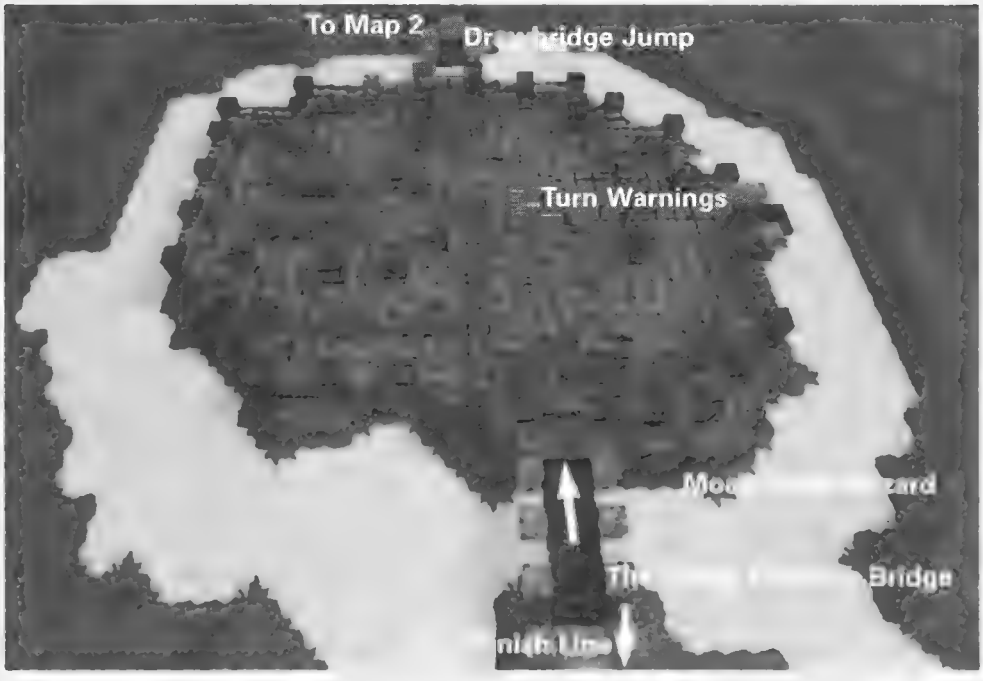
There's a short road at the beginning of the Highlands Rally just behind you and off to the left. Although it seems to lead nowhere, this stretch of road actually leads to a soccer field. To find the field, follow the road as it leads out and away from the course. Stay on a straight path and you run right into the field. But don't just enjoy the scenery—try a little football yourself. The computer won't keep score, but if you're playing a multiplayer game, you can get one driver to keep score while others take turns playing Monster Truck Soccer!

Track Report: The Highlands Rally begins with a brief straightaway that gives you the opportunity to take the lead. Be careful going over the bridge; a slight bump can push you over the edge—and out of the race.

The course turns sharply to the left after this first bridge and then over another bridge and into another straightaway. Gun it briefly, but be prepared to slow down for another bridge. This one leads into



Highlands Rally Map 1



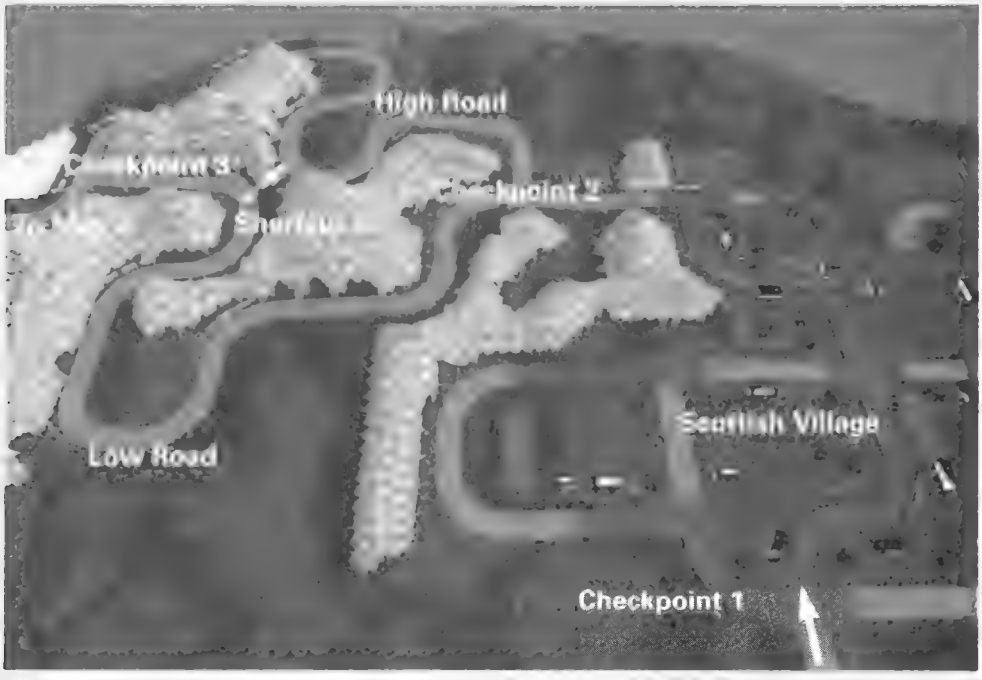
Start/Finish Line: *You start the race just before this map begins.*

The Castle Entrance Bridge: *Enter the castle here. Pay careful attention to the openings in the side of bridge. One false move and you're in the drink.*

Turn Warning: *These two turn warnings were put here to keep you from slamming into the wall. Avoid flipping your truck by cutting into the turn early.*

Drawbridge Jump: *This short jump carries you into the Scottish countryside and toward your first checkpoint.*

Highlands Rally Map 2

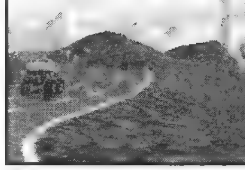


Scottish Village: *If you're bumped by another truck and get turned around here, it can be hard to find your way out. Your best bet is to follow the signs and take only recommended shortcuts.*

High Road (Shortcut): *By turning around and heading up the high road, you can save valuable seconds.*

Low Road (Main Route): *This is a longer route around the hills.*

Shortcut 1: *Zip through this pass in the hills and keep right, taking the high road and heading for Checkpoint 3.*



the castle, where you must follow the cobblestone path. Don't waste time looking for a shortcut; just take a left and then a right midway through the castle.

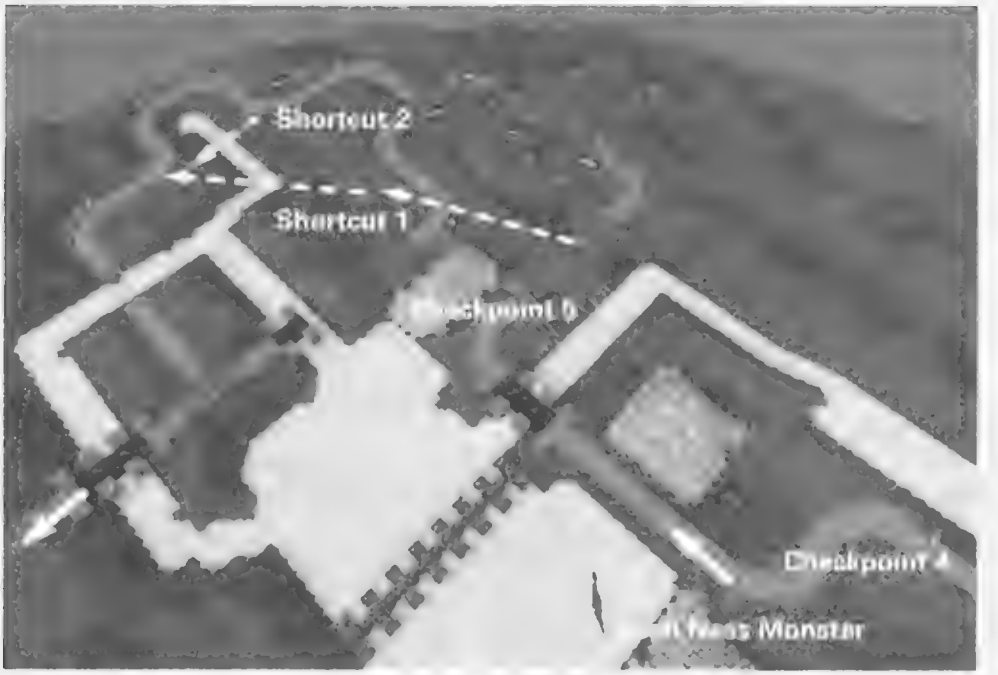
As the course straightens back out, quickly gain speed—you need to be going at least 45 mph for the jump ahead. Continue straight through the first checkpoint after the jump, then follow the course into the village to the right. This is a good place to put the moves on the competition, so try to tear ahead of the pack. The road continues, now turning left. (Watch carefully for turning signs.)

Go straight through the crossroads and follow the course around the village to the left. The course now weaves right and then turns sharply to the left. From here, a straightaway leads through the second checkpoint, to the left, and then back to the right to go through the rocky Scottish countryside. After a bend to the left, a wide right-hand turn opens into a short straightaway

To take the "high road" shortcut, turn around after you go through the second checkpoint and retrace your steps to the side road just before the checkpoint. This shortcut takes you to the third checkpoint.

It's easy to lose your way among the confusing crossroads, but you can even the odds by getting your opponents lost. Simply knock over all the signs at any intersection during a multiplayer game. Without proper directions, the other drivers roam through the villages while you strut across the finish line.

Highlands Rally Map 3



Shortcut 1: *Take this shortcut just after Checkpoint 5 to bypass the small village in the upper corner. The road appears to end, but you can continue to follow it around to the left. If you prefer, you can follow the course and take the second checkpoint.*

Shortcut 2: *This shortcut through the water hazard can save you a second or two. Try to jump the water for even better time.*

Loch Ness Monster: *Hey, you want real monsters? We got 'em. Nessie makes an appearance just after you pass Checkpoint 4.*

and then around a bend to the right.

The snake-like course follows a wide left-hand turn, another short straightaway, and, to the left, the third checkpoint. Don't overshoot the checkpoint by going too quickly. The course now curves right into a straightaway. Although it's short, build up speed during this section before the track zigzags left, right, left, right, and then left back toward the castle. Watch both your speed and style—you don't want to make a mistake this close to the finish line.

The "high road" shortcut puts you on a direct course for the third checkpoint. If you can keep a good top speed through the shortcut, you can beat the other drivers to the checkpoint. If you crash or skid off the road, you lose the time you gained and end up chasing the other trucks again.

The road turns right and weaves its way toward the fourth checkpoint. Stay on course around to the right, and watch for Nessie (the Loch Ness monster) just off to your right. A medium-sized length of straightaway leads through the fifth checkpoint. The final stretch takes you back through a village on a wide tight left turn or you can cut across the country. Use the overlay map to find the shortest route to the finish line. Follow the signs through the village, and stay on course through the small water hazard and a hard right. Now floor it for the long straightaway, your last chance to make a move before the finish line.

Yucatan Adventure

Pit Report: The Yucatan Adventure is routed across a beautiful tropical paradise. This incredible course offers you plenty of opportunities to put the moves on the competition and generally make great lap times. Shortcuts are easy to find, too.

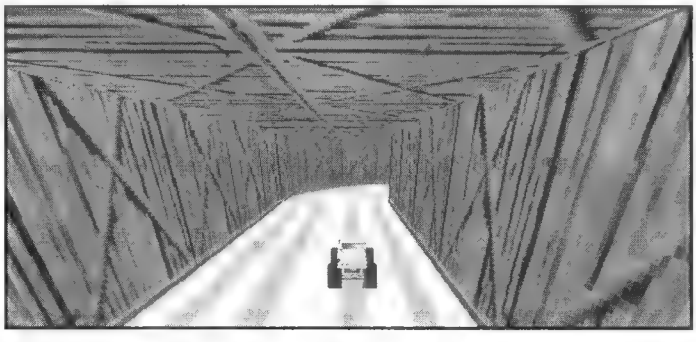
Although most of the course is situated around resort property, don't get distracted by your surroundings. Smart drivers familiarize themselves with the course before tearing off in search of shortcuts, and there are many. The course has five checkpoints and ends with a fantastic jump over a volcano.

Here's a bird's-eye view of the grand strand on the Yucatan Adventure.

Track Report: From the starting line, you can opt to follow the course around the hotel or take a shortcut through the rear parking lot and behind the line of hotels. The shortcut obviously saves you time. The track continues to follow the beach, and you should gain as much speed as possible during a short straightaway leading to the first checkpoint.

You can avoid the tunnel just after the first checkpoint by taking a shortcut up this ridge. The shortcut takes you up, over, and around the tunnel, and then drops you back on the track. Just use the roof of the tunnel as a driving guide.

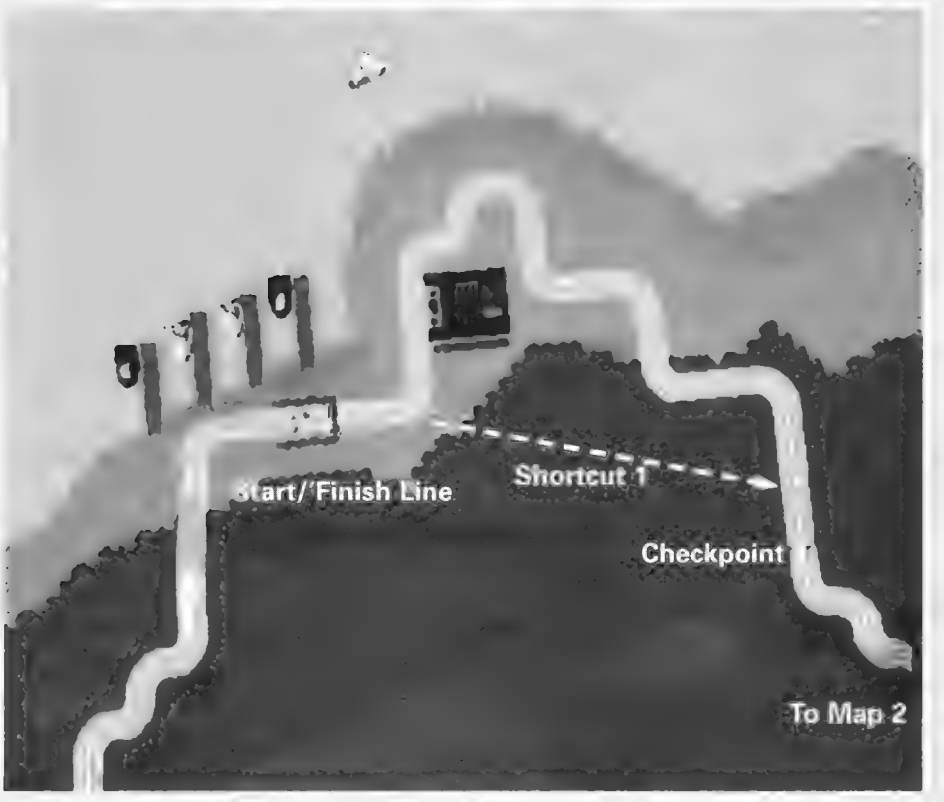
After the checkpoint, follow the trail into a tunnel and into a sharp right. The track straightens briefly and takes another sharp right before you exit the tunnel. You're still following the shoreline, weaving left and right as it does. Speed up when you reach a straightaway and push through the second checkpoint.



Keep your vehicle in a center lane when you're inside a tunnel or castle. This keeps you away from walls and gives you a few seconds of precious reaction time.

Now the course veers left toward another tunnel. Slow down to make the hard right and then the hard left leading into another tunnel. Just before the tunnel

Yucatan Adventure Rally Map 1

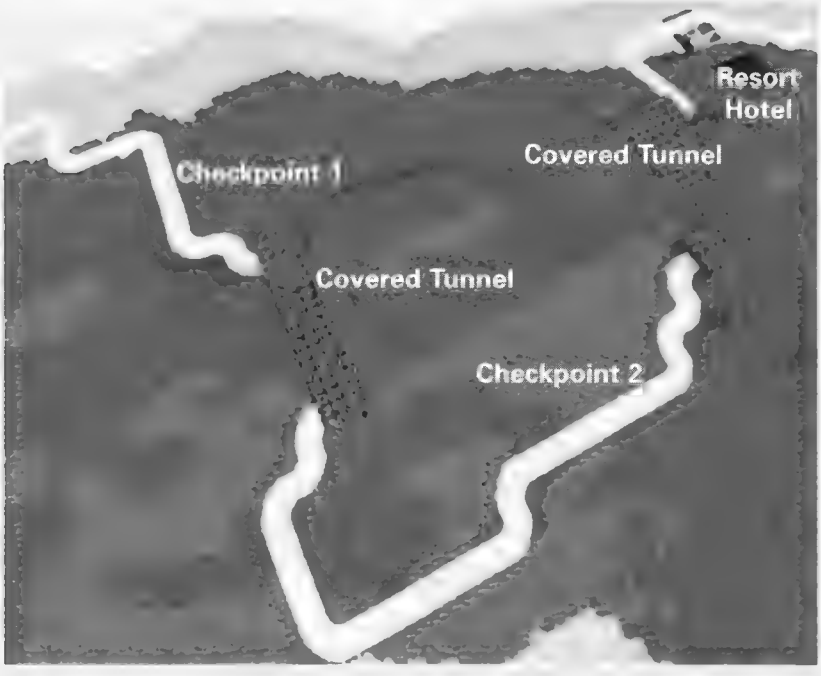


Start/Finish Line: *Don't let the beautiful view of the ocean take your mind off the task at hand.*

The Dock: *After a race (or when you're tinkering in multiplayer mode), take your truck for a swim by flying off the end of any of these piers.*

Shortcut 1: *Swing behind this resort hotel to shave a few seconds off the clock, then get back on the course and keep going!*

Yucatan Adventure Rally Map 2



Covered Tunnel: *Keep the truck in middle of the road when you pass through the covered tunnel. Both tunnels can be bypassed by driving up and around the surrounding hills.*

Resort Hotel: *Save even more precious lap time by cutting through back parking lot of this resort. Watch out for palm trees!*

Yucatan Adventure Rally Map 3

Resort Hotel: *These resort properties have great parking-lot shortcuts—you just need to know where to look. Be careful of curbs, palms trees, and other obstacles surrounding the resort.*

Shortcut 1: *This easy shortcut rips across the front side of the island. Take it and cut a few seconds off your overall lap time.*

Shortcut 2: *By avoiding the strip or grand strand and cutting behind hotels, you can shave as much as five seconds of your lap time.*

Shortcut 3: *Instead of following the course around the fountain, take a detour before you get to it! This keeps you away from the water and saves time.*

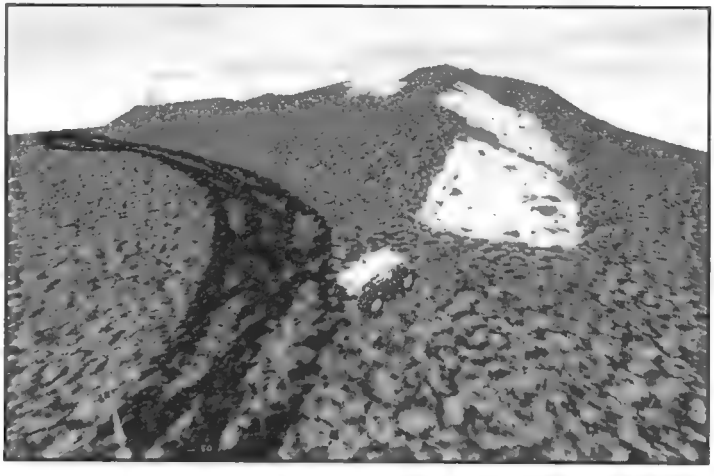
Suspension Bridge to Volcano and Map 4: *In lower graphics resolutions, the guardrails on the suspension bridge disappear. So be careful when crossing if you're using those settings.*

opens, you must make another hard right, which leads out of the tunnel and left toward the coastline.

Follow the course as it passes the Island Inn; a long straightaway takes you around the edge of the peninsula until the road runs out. Continue along the unpaved trail and prepare to make a wide, tight right when you see a large fountain. After you hit the third checkpoint, step on the gas and keep your truck centered as you cross a bridge. Now you have a decision to make. You can either follow the broken road straight ahead or take the dirt track left and circle the volcano. (See map 4.)

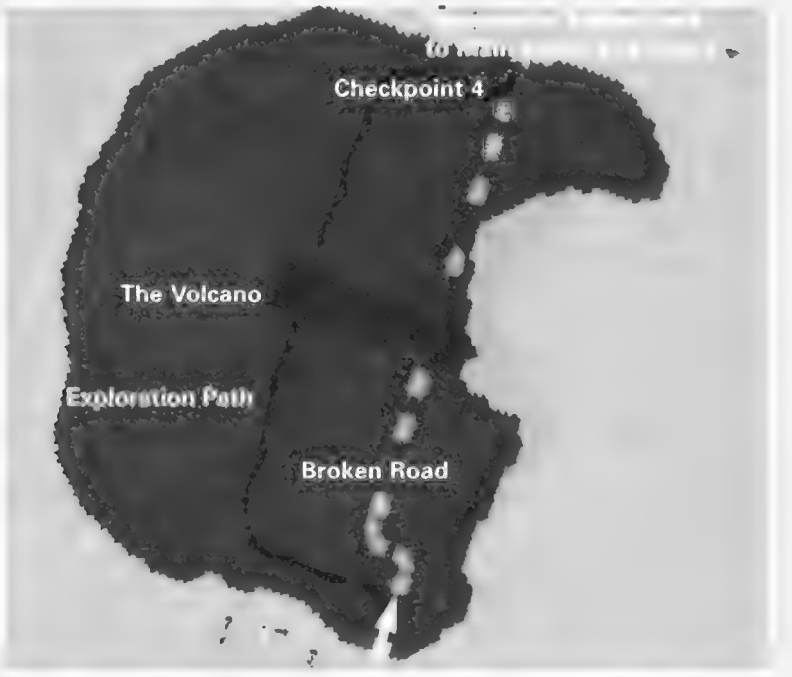
Once you cleared the volcano, keep your eyes peeled for the fourth checkpoint. Again, keep your truck straight as you pass through the checkpoint

Take this corner as tightly as possible. You're surrounded by water, and you don't want to become shark bait.



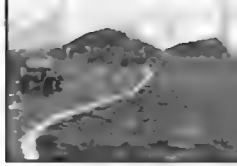
When you get to the volcano, you can take the high road (the exploration path), or the low road (the broken paved road) to get around it.

Yucatan Adventure Rally Map 4

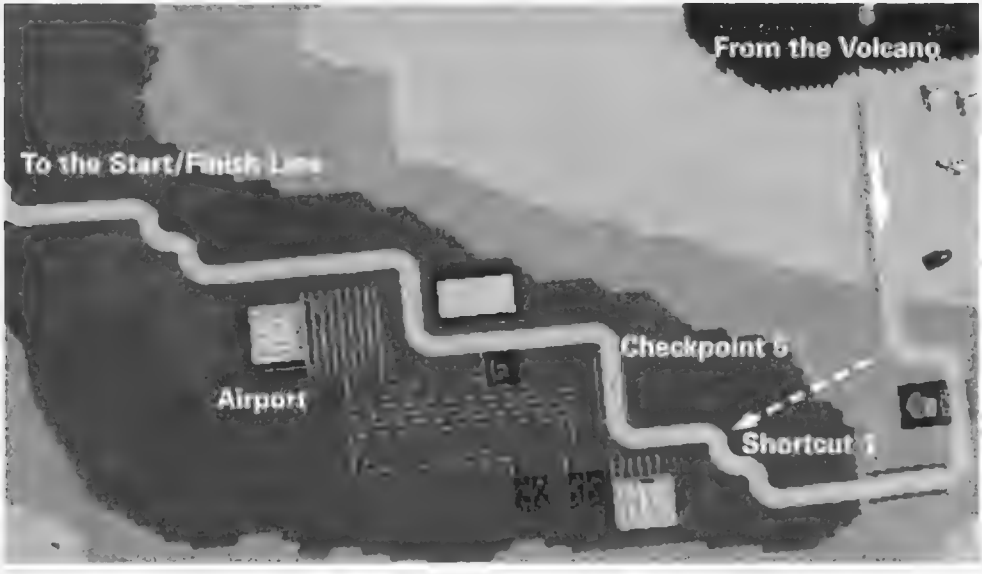


Exploration Path: *The exploration path leads off to the left and around the edge of the volcano. It's a red-hot ride into and over the volcano's mouth. The path quickly climbs up the slope, but you must take a soaring leap over the fiery chasm. Luckily, getting across the mouth is as simple as flooring the accelerator. This part of the course is more exciting than the broken road, but it's not necessarily shorter.*

Broken Paved Road: *Follow the broken pavement for a direct shot at the fourth checkpoint. Step on the gas the second you hit this stretch, and hold the truck straight and steady. The broken road leads directly to the checkpoint. When you reach the lava flow, jump the small gap and keep going.*

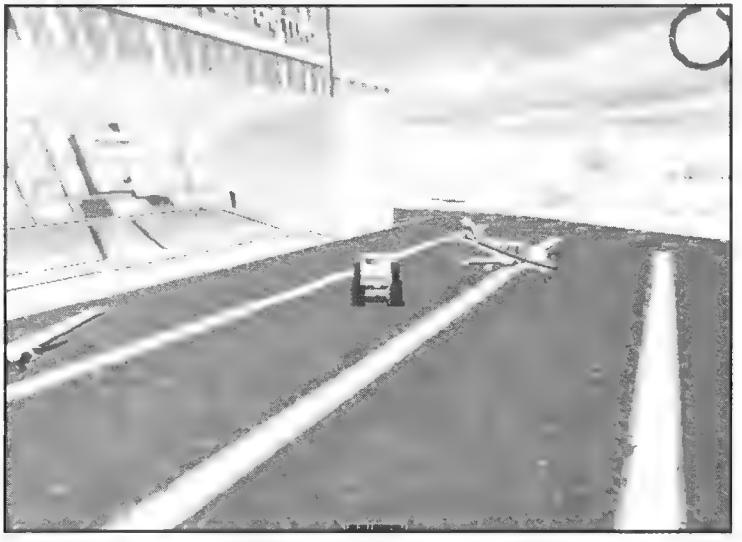


Yucatan Adventure Rally Map 5



Shortcut 1: *You can bypass the edge of the island by cutting the corner early and taking this shortcut toward the airport.*

Airport: *You can check out aircraft that might be in future TRI releases at the airport. But more importantly, use the airplanes and helicopters as obstacles for the other drivers.*

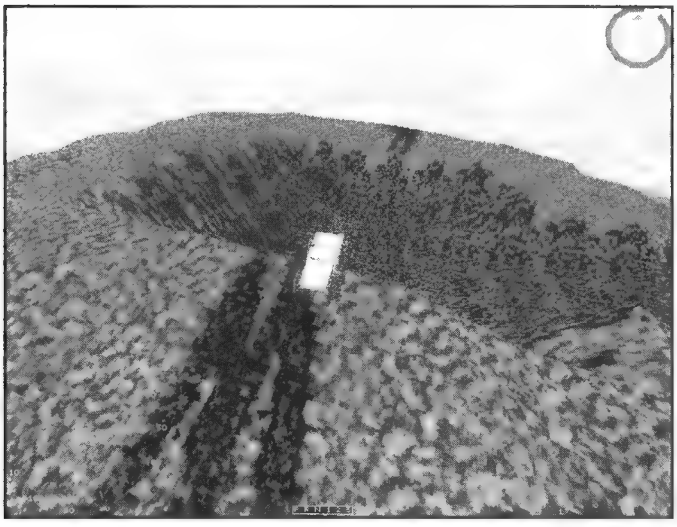


While you might be tempted to take a shortcut through the airport and around the hangars, stay close to the course. The airport runways are wide open, but the two hangars act as a cul-de-sac, trapping your vehicle.

You can take a shortcut over the hills just past the airport and fly to the finish line, but be careful. If you're going too fast, you'll overshoot the finish and wind up in the drink.

and cross the bridge. You should be able to max out the throttle here, but you've got to keep your truck away from the bridge railings.

Take a slight left after the bridge and continue to follow the course along the shoreline. Keep your foot on the accelerator until you see an airport hangar on the right. Gradually slow to make the sharp right and hit the fifth, final checkpoint. Now start gaining speed through the airport, but don't forget to watch out for plane and truck obstacles. If possible, stomp on the gas and go all out during this last stretch, but even if you need to reserve fuel, be an aggressive driver. The course ends with a sharp



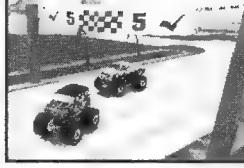
There's a hot time on the town tonight! But don't sweat missing the jump, the lava can't hurt your truck. If you miss the jump, you can drive through the volcano's mouth to the other side.

right leading to the finish line.

The Volcano

Positioned on the far side of the Yucatan Adventure, the volcano is huge and harmless, but it's nonetheless an obstacle that can seriously slow you down. Two different routes lead around the volcano, each with its own unique appeal. The first, a broken paved road, is the most direct route. The second, a black exploration path that circles the volcano, is longer, but more scenic.

Chapter Seven



Tournament Racing

Tournament Racing challenges every skill in the drivers' toolbox. It pushes the monster trucks through exhausting paces. It's *the* most demanding part of monster-truck racing.

Tourneys combine several events, each designed to separate the casual driver from the real racer. Some tourneys are a grab bag of events ranging from drags to rallies to circuit races. Others focus on several rigorous circuits. But no matter how severe the challenge or how skilled the competition, you must consistently do well in every event. Tournaments are point-based, and it's your overall performance—not just doing well in a single race—that determines whether you take home the trophy.

The Tournaments

The Tournament mode includes three tourneys, although you can customize a particular event or even make up your own tourney. Keep in mind that tournaments are recommended only for experienced drivers. Rookies should apply after they've taken a few hundred laps around the circuit and rally courses. Drag racing also comes into play, so make sure your speed and staging skills have been refined as well.

Since tournaments consist of a collection of various races, you can find the advice and strategy for each event you might encounter outlined in the preceding chapters. Refer to the appropriate drag, circuit, or rally chapter with any questions about how a particular course or race should be driven.

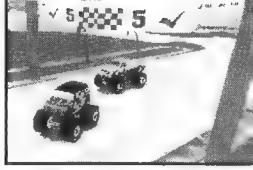
Doug's Tournament of Evil

This tournament not only tests your driving skills, but it pushes your driving endurance to the limits as well. The tournament begins with a hot rally through the Arizona desert course. From there, it's on to the Trans World Dome and a J-style drag. These two events are simple and fairly straightforward: try to place high and stay out of trouble.

The next leg of the tournament brings you to the Canyon Adventure circuit course for five laps. You can't afford to lose tournament points, so carefully plan your racing strategy in advance.

Main Tournament Screen

The fourth event is a J-styled drag at the Tacoma Dome. And the final event in Doug's Tournament of Evil is a grueling 20 laps around the Winding Way circuit. If you aren't already thinking about retiring your truck, you probably will after 10 or 15 laps on this puppy. But don't let fatigue cloud your judgment. Plan your racing strategy, make those checkpoints, and stay out of trouble. Again, if you want specific strategies on beating particular courses, refer to the circuit, drag, or rally chapters where those courses are covered.

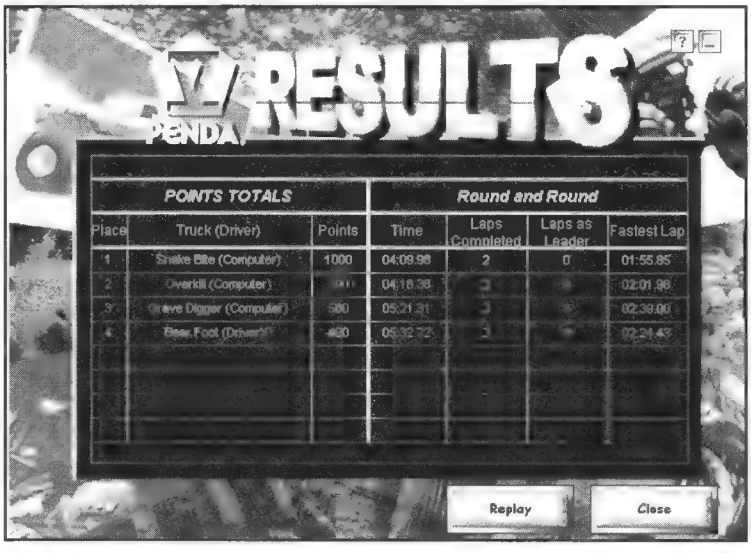


Monster Truck Triathlon

You have to be prepared for anything during this take-no-prisoners tournament. It begins at the Trans World Dome with a J-styled drag and then includes ten laps on the Winding Way circuit. After those two events (if you're still alive in the points standing), you wrap up the tourney with a fantastic rally through the Yucatan Adventure. Keep a close eye on the points standings throughout the rally, and watch other point leaders carefully. They're the drivers to beat.

Whirlwind Circuit Madness

Whirlwind is right—this tourney spins you into two blazing laps on every circuit course. To make things even more interesting, you face the courses in reverse, so you begin with Mud Pies and end with A Crazy Eight. To win the points race, you must stay sharp, take the shortcuts, and cut off your competition—not to mention consistently placing first. On these short two-lap races, an early accident, or even a fender bender late in the race, could put you completely out of the points race.



Carefully study the point standings between races to identify the point leaders. These drivers—whether they're computer or human—are usually the ones you must beat to win the tourney.

Quitting a Tourney

If you're in the middle of a tournament event and decide to quit, be warned! You won't get credit for the race or any points, and you must continue with the next race in the tournament unless you back completely out of the Tournament section. So if you're in an accident or have some other problem, try to finish the event even if you can't possibly win. At least you won't lose all your racing points.

Creating your own Tournament

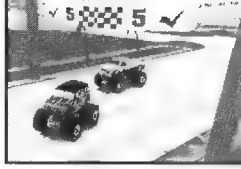
If the tournaments in Microsoft Monster Truck Madness aren't challenging your driving skills quite enough, or if you believe they're a little *too* challenging, you can make up your own tournament. By creating a custom tourney, you decide which events are included and the order in which they're to be contested. Once you've created, named, and saved your custom tournament, it's added to the list of tournament selections, and you can access it just like anything else on the Tournament screen race list.

To create, name, and save a custom tournament, first go to the Monster Truck Madness startup screen. Click on Races from the menu bar and select Tournament. Click on Custom and select New. Now you're ready to begin making your own custom tournament.

To name your tourney, highlight "Untitled Tournament," and type in any name you wish. Be creative! Be creative with the Description box, too, but be sure you include your tourney's vital statistics. Once you've created a few tourneys, it's tough to keep them straight.

Now click on Events and look at the available courses and races. Double-click on an event to add it to your Selected Events folder, or double-click on an event in Selected Events to remove it again. Remember that events occur in the order in which you choose them.

When you add a circuit race, you can also adjust the number of required laps. To do this, highlight the circuit in Selected Events and then adjust the number in the Laps box with the directional arrows, or simply type in a new number.



Once you've finished tweaking your tourney, you need to save it for posterity. Click on Save and wait for a File Name box to appear. Type the name of the tournament or other identifying file name in the box and then click on Save. It's saved in the Tourney folder. Now you can return to the main Tournament screen to try out your tournament!

Get Outta There!

To jettison any tournament you've created, select Delete from the Custom Tournament screen, and then highlight the tourney you wish to delete. The game asks you if you're sure, and make sure that you are—the only way to retrieve a deleted tournament is to rebuild it from scratch. Once you click on OK, the tourney is erased.

Customizing a Tournament

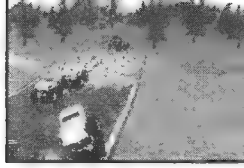
If an existing tournament has a certain event you don't like, you can change it to omit the offending event. Access the Tournament screen from Races on the Main Menu, and then click on Custom. Select the tourney you wish to modify from the Select Tournament menu. Rename your new tournament (so you won't overwrite the original file) by clicking on Save, typing in a new title in the File Name box, and then clicking on Save again.

Here's the new Rally of Thunder tournament, customized to our specifications.

Type in a description of your new tourney and remove or add events in Selected Events by double-clicking on event names. You can change the order of the events, take out the ones you dislike, and add events you enjoy. Don't forget that events are run in the order you select and that you can change the number of laps required in circuit races. To save the tournament you've just changed, click on Save. To return to the Main Tournament screen and race the tourney, click on Back.

Stop by the Garage

Because each tournament has a variety of events, it's important to visit the Garage and adjust your truck for each new race. Click on Garage from the informational screen describing the next event. And refer to Chapter Two: The Monster Trucks for a complete list of recommended truck configurations for each track.



Racing Multiple Opponents

So far you've learned how to play Microsoft Monster Truck Madness against the computer. You've seen how to tweak you truck for optimal performance. You've familiarized yourself with the tracks and racing conditions.

Now you're ready to race human opponents in a multiplayer environment. The tracks and trucks are the same as in your races against the computer, but now players use their own computers to control their individual trucks, just as if they were playing against the computer. (No drag racing allowed, though; multiplayer games are limited to rally or circuit races.)

Monster Truck Madness allows you to match your skills against a friend or even a group of friends. Racing against humans is more fun than computer opponents because humans are more unpredictable, and also because you can send taunts and challenges to each other during a race. If you want, you can even gang up on one driver by forming a common racing strategy via private messages to other drivers. After all, this is no-holds-barred monster trucking and there's a checkered flag to be won.

This chapter explores different ways to enjoy multiplayer games and offers step-by-step instruction on how to connect to other computers and set up a multiplayer Monster Truck Madness environment.

Hooking Up

To play in a multiplayer game of Monster Truck Madness, the computer of each player must be connect to each of the others in the race.

Computers can be connected in various ways, and Monster Truck Madness supports several of those ways. The simplest connection method is via modem. Simply put, there are two computers, two modems, and one phone line. The first computer uses its modem to dial the other one on the phone; the second computer uses its modem to answer the phone, establishing the connection. Modem connections are also called one-to-one connections because they allow only two players to race each other (no conference calls allowed).

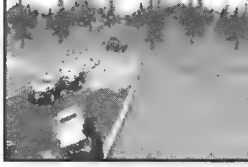
Once upon a time, modem hookups were the most popular way to link two personal computer. But nowadays, Internet connections are the most common way to access other computers. Once you and a friend or two (or three or four) are connected to the Internet, it's relatively simple to connect to each other's computer for a multiplayer game session.

Internet connections aren't one-to-one. However, how many players can be involved in a single game depends upon the characteristics of your Internet connection. In most cases, you can race against three (or fewer) players no matter which Internet Service Provider (ISP) each of the players uses. If all participants use the same ISP, you might be able to have up to eight drivers in a single race.

Another advantage of Internet connections as compared to one-to-one connections is that you can race players in another state—or another continent—for the same price as you could race someone in the same city. You're limited in both modem and Internet hookups by the speed of the slowest modem among the participants. In other words, even if you have a fast 28.8 Δ137

k bps modem, if your opponent is slogging along with a 14.4 kbps, that's the speed at which you'll play. Naturally, the faster the modem connection, the smoother the game play. Monster Truck Madness requires a 14.4 or faster modem.

Some games let you go through an online "matchmaking" service to find opponents. In this connection, you use an Internet site to find other racers interested in joining you, and you then set up the match. Although no matchmaking service was available for Monster Truck Madness at



press time, one might be developed after the game is published. Keep an eye on Monster Truck Web Stop (click the Web Stop button on the Main Menu) for the latest developments.

A third option is to take advantage of a permanent network connection among a group of computers. Some people—especially office workers—are connected by a local area network (LAN), such as an interoffice system, and LAN-play offers the fastest way to access other computers for a multiplayer game. Of course, while you can play against a player from any corner of the earth with a modem and Internet account, local area networks limit your competition to players on the same network—and your boss might frown on heated Monster Truck Madness sessions during work hours. No matter where your LAN is, it lets you easily reach the maximum number of participants (eight). There is one limitation, however; Monster Truck Madness requires that the LAN support WinSock IPX or WinSock TCP .

Basic Concepts

Before you can engage in a multiplayer game, you must contact the other players to arrange the game. Set a time for the game to start, agree on the type of race, and make sure you're set up and ready to go at the predetermined time. Fire up your computer, have refreshments and snacks handy (after all, a game might last for hours), and get ready for some racin' entertainment.

One of the computers in a multiplayer game is called the *host*. It's this computer that coordinates the race participants. The host user ultimately decides which players will participate, the skill level, and the type of race. It is possible for two different drivers to select—and race in—identical races. Players joining the game select the truck they're to drive. Once the game begins, however, there are no differences between the host's computer and any other player's computer.

If you're the host, you must call your friends (or notify them by electronic mail) to tell them when your computer will be in host mode so they can call in and get connected. Then you should start your Monster

Truck Madness program. Once you have, your friends should also start their game program, then contact your computer. The process of establishing a connection between the player's machine and the host machine is called *joining* the game.

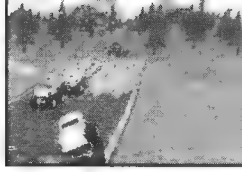
Getting Connected

If you're establishing a direct modem-to-modem connection, the person joining the game dials the telephone number of the host computer. If you're establishing an Internet connection, the person joining supplies a special number (the Internet Protocol, or IP address of the host computer) and the two computers connect. If you're establishing a LAN connection, you don't have to do anything special—the program finds all the other computers on the network that are running Monster Truck Madness, and you can set up a race just by selecting your opponents' names. We explain all of this in more detail later in the chapter.

Once the computers are connected, the Monster Truck Madness programs on each gets information about the other drivers and displays the opponents' trucks on-screen. Each player sees the same thing on his or her screen as in a solo match. The only difference is that some of the trucks are controlled by humans instead of the computer.

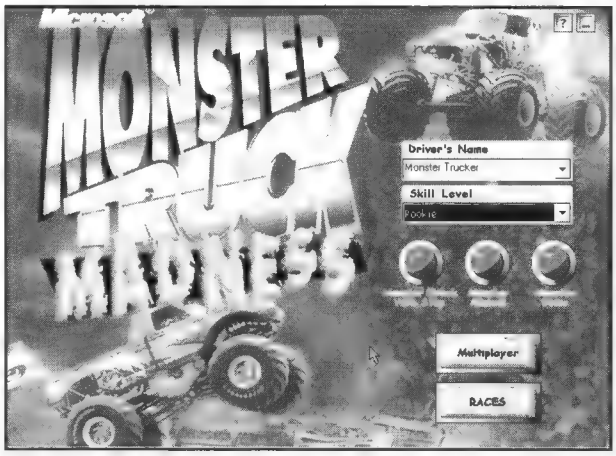
That's right, you can have a combination of human and computer opponents. If the game slows down when you try to add more than three players, but you enjoy the thrill of a full eight-driver race, have the computer fill in the other four slots.

Here's a step-by-step guide that explains what you need to do to host or join a multiplayer game. The steps are the same, regardless of the connection type you're using, except for the choice you need to make in the Select a Connection dialogue box. These selections are explained in the sections on LAN and Internet play.



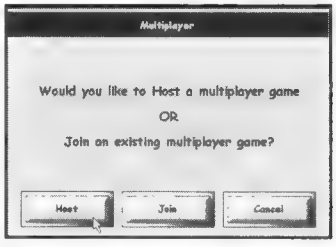
Hosting a Race

1. Start Monster Truck Madness and select a driver's name (or type in a new one) on the Main Menu. Choose a skill level, keeping in mind that it will be the level at which all the opponents race.



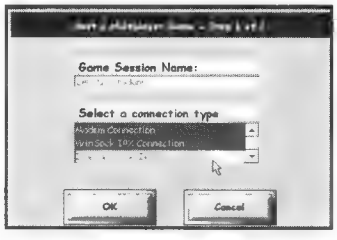
The host selects a name for his or her driver, and the skill level at which all the players race.

2. Choose the Multiplayer button to set up the program. The Multiplayer dialog box prompts you to choose whether you're hosting or joining a race.



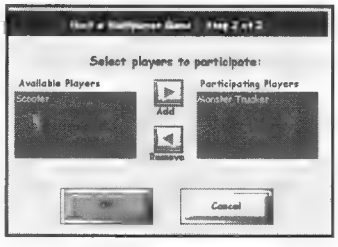
Specify that you're hosting a race.

3. Now you get the first of two Host a Multiplayer Game dialog boxes. As the host, you get to make up a name for the racing session, which you type in the Game Session Name slot. In the Select a Connection Type slot, select the type of connect, then click OK.



Specify a name for the session and the type of connection in the dialog box.

4. For Host a Multiplayer Game dialog box, you have a list of Available Players and Participating Players. Your



The second dialog box lets you bring in another player to the race.

driver's name should already be in the Participating Players list. The name of the player connecting to your computer via modem will appear in the Available Players box once they're connected.

5. Double-click on each of your opponents' names, or select the name and then select the Add button to move that player's name to the Participating Players box. After all the players are listed for the race, select the OK button.

6. When the Races screen appears, you're ready to select your truck and move out onto the track. Because this is process is the same for both the host and the other players, it's described below in the section "Preparing to Race."

Joining a Race

If another person is serving as host, follow these steps to join the game.

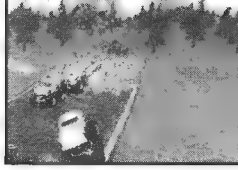
After the host selects a race, the host driver's name appears on his or her own screen while the host waits for other players to select a truck and click the Race button.

1. Select or type in a driver's name on the Main Menu.

2. Press the Multiplayer button in the lower right-hand corner.

3. Select the Join button when the Multiplayer dialog box appears.

4. In the first Join a Multiplayer Game dialog box, select Modem Connection under Select a Connect Type, then click on OK.



5. Select OK on the second Join a Multiplayer Game dialog box. The Dial dialog box appears. Enter the telephone number of the host computer, and then double-click. Try again if the host doesn't respond, or call the host on a second phone line to see if he or she is ready to play.

6. Once you've established a connection, wait for the host to add your name to the list of participants. A dialog box informs you that the computer is waiting for the host to answer and establish the connection. The connection is complete when the Races dialog box is displayed on your screen. When the Races dialog box appears, you're ready to select your truck and move out onto the track. Because this process is the same for both the host and the other players, it's described next in the section "Preparing to Race."

Preparing to Race

1. Pick the truck you wish to drive on the Races screen. If you're the host, you also need to select the type of race. You cannot move on to the next screen until a type of race has been selected. Once the Next button lights up, select it to move on.

2. Depending upon the type of race that was selected, you see either the Circuit or Rally screen. You can preview the track at this point or go to the Garage to prepare your truck. When you're ready to race, select the Race button. The race won't begin until everyone is ready, so you might receive a message telling you your computer is waiting for the host (or another player) to make his or her selections.

Modem Connections

As we said, modems allow two computers to connect to each other through the telephone line. Connected computers engage in a conversation in much the same way you do. The benefit of modem play

is that it's easy to set up and costs next to nothing if both players are within the same dialing area. A long-distance modem call costs the same as a long-distance phone call—but time can really add up in the middle of a heated race, so keep your eye on the clock.

If you're hosting the modem multiplayer game, load Monster Track Madness and set it to host the game. Then wait for your opponent to connect to your computer and join the race. He or she must wait for you to set up the host computer, then dial your phone number to connect. Once you see the player's name appear in the list of opponents, add it to the race and get down to business.

Hosting a Race Via Modem

Follow the steps listed above for starting a Multiplayer game. Choose Modem Connection under Select a Connection Type. Click on OK, and then finish setting up the game.

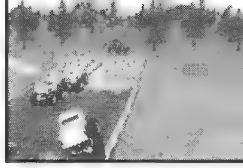
Joining a Race Via Modem

If another person has set up his or her computer as a host on a local area network, when the first Join a Multiplayer Game dialog box appears (see figure), choose Modem Connection under Select a Connection Type. Press OK.

LAN Connections

LAN connections are faster than modem or Internet connections and offer very smooth multiplayer races. You must use whatever protocol your network requires to play; Monster Truck Madness supports the WinSock IPX and WinSock TCP/IP, used by the vast majority of local networks.

Specify the type of protocol used on your local network, and the program takes care of the rest. If you're hosting a game, it lets all other computers know that a new session is available. If you're joining a session, your computer finds all the host sessions on the network. In



other words, it's possible to have several simultaneous multiplayer games on a network, and each session can accommodate up to eight participants.

If you don't know what protocol your network uses, consult your administrator, the network instruction manual, or try both options. If for some reason your network doesn't support either protocol, you must rely on a modem or the Internet to participate in a multiplayer race.

Hosting a Race Via LAN

Follow the steps listed above for starting a Multiplayer game. Select either WinSock TCP Connection or WinSock IPX Connection under Select a Connection Type. Click on OK and finish setting up the game.

Joining a Race Via a LAN

If another person has set up his or her computer as a host on a local area network, choose WinSock TCP/IP Connection or WinSock IPX Connection under Select a Connection Type when the first Join a Multiplayer Game dialog box appears (see figure). Press OK.

Internet Connections

The Internet is probably the best method for setting up a multiplayer session of Monster Truck Madness. You can expect many more potential players to be available to race than in your group of friends or coworkers.

If you're already using the Internet for multiplayer gaming, you might be familiar with communication tools such as IRC (Internet Relay Chat), which lets people chat from worldwide locations, or Internet telephony applications that allow you to talk and listen to other users with your multimedia computer. These tools enable you to communicate with other players while setting up a game, or even as you race, making a multiplayer session easy to play and lots of fun, too.

What Should You Know About the Internet?

Those of you familiar with the Internet can skip this section and head for the track. But if you're a game player who has yet to venture online, you're really missing something. The Internet not only provides players with the capability to engage in multiplayer games, but it also gives them access to numerous resources about their favorite games.

The Internet is a popular hangout today for game players and researchers alike. Its enormous network of computers span the globe, and, with the appropriate software, you can communicate with every machine and every user on the Internet.

The way you communicate with other Internet users depends on the software you're using. To exchange messages with other users, you need an electronic-mail program. To talk live to other users, you need a so-called Internet telephony application. You can even set up a conference with other users with a conferencing application like Microsoft's NetMeeting. Or, of course, you can engage in a multiplayer game of Monster Truck Madness.

Multiplayer sessions, over a wide geographical area, are the Internet's contributions to gaming. Almost since its birth people have used the Internet for two-player games, but back then chess and blackjack were the order of the day. Little information had to be moved from one computer to another, and delays were well tolerated.

But the situation's different with an action game like Monster Truck Madness. *Lots* of information must be exchanged between machines, and it's crucial that the information is sent and received in timely fashion. To pass or block another driver, you must see your competitor immediately. And the more drivers on the track the more important this information becomes.

The game program tries to minimize the amount of information moved among computers and makes sure that the computer screens are synchronized, even if this means momentarily freezing the action. But the program can't do a thing about connection speed. If your connection to the Internet is slow—or the Internet itself is slow because of heavy

traffic—the game won't be as enjoyable. A 28.8 kbps modem is highly recommended, and if you can find opponents on the same Internet Service Provider, you get even more out of your Internet connection because you can play with seven opponents instead of a maximum of four.

To connect to the Internet, you need a modem and an account with an Internet Service Provider, such as The Microsoft Network (MSN). The ISP maintains a computer (the server) which is connected to the Internet, and every time you connect through their server, you have access to the Internet. When you subscribe to an Internet Service Provider, you get an account (a user name and a password which lets you connect to the ISP's computer), along with instructions about connecting your Windows computer to the Internet.

These days, it's easy to locate an ISP—try looking for ads in your local newspaper or consulting friends already using the Internet. Be sure to shop around because there are a lot of different packages available. All providers charge a monthly fee for the service, but some offer five hours, some 20 hours, and some unlimited time. Each additional hour over your package amount also costs money.

Tip: *If you dial into The Microsoft Network using an MSN Internet number, you can establish a TCP/IP connection to the Internet through MSN. To search for available MSN Internet numbers in your area, select Categories from the MSN Central menu; in the Categories Window double-click on Internet Center, then on Getting on the Internet. Click on the blue bar that says Setup Instructions, and you'll see a window with a phone icon labeled Internet Phone Number List.*

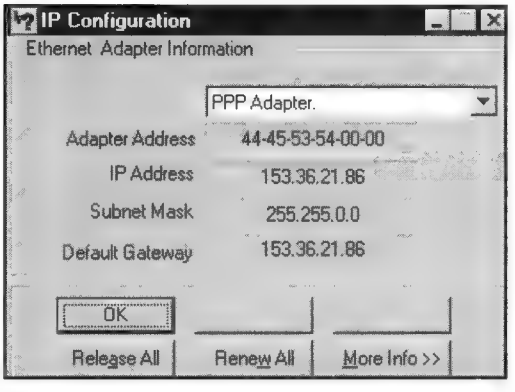
Getting Your IP Address

Hosting a race via the Internet is similar to hosting a race by modem, except more than two participants can play, and players must provide an Internet address (an IP) instead of a phone number. This isn't your easy-to-remember email address, it's a TCP/IP address, the equivalent of your phone number on the Internet: four groups of four numbers, each ranging from 0 to 255 (for example,

192.30.105.23). TCP/IP is Transmission Control Protocol over Internet Protocol. Whenever you access the Internet by dialing into a dedicated Internet Service Provider (ISP), you're establishing a TCP/IP connection.

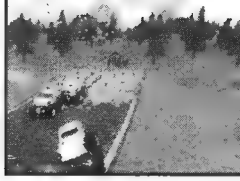
This number is assigned to you by your Internet Service Provider, and it's usually different every time you connect to the Internet. If you happen to have a fixed IP address, prepare for popularity—you'll likely become the target of fans looking for a quick game because it's much easier to join a race if you know the host's IP address ahead of time. If you enjoy hosting races, you might even want to consider getting a fixed IP subscription offered (for a fee) by a few Internet Service Providers.

If you have the new versions of America Online and Compuserve for Windows 95, you may be able to connect to the Internet through the services in a way that allows you to obtain an IP address. Check with these service providers on availability of the necessary 32-bit drivers. MSN users who use The Microsoft Network only as their Service type cannot connect to another player either. (To find out what Service type you're using on The Microsoft Network, click on Settings on the MSN Sign In Screen; if the Service type is "Internet and the Microsoft Network" or "ISDN access to the Internet and MSN," you're able to obtain a TCP/IP address, but if it just says "The Microsoft Network," you won't. Try changing access numbers to bring up the service.)



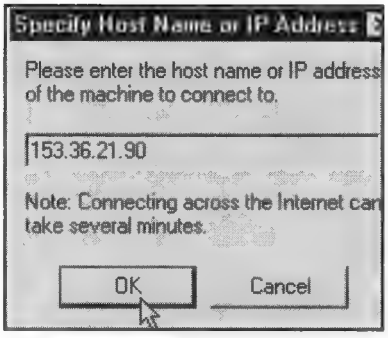
The IP Configuration window shows your IP address.

But regardless of whether you have a dynamically assigned or a fixed IP address, here's how you find out what the number is without going through whatever protocol your service provides requires to discover your current session IP address. Once you've logged onto your Internet service provider, Select the Start box on the bottom menu bar of Windows 95, or, if



Monster Truck Madness or some other program is running, press Esc-Ctrl to bring up the Start dialog box. Go to Run and type WINIPCFG into the dialog box. Press OK and a IP Configuration dialog box appears which lists your IP address.

Make sure the entry of the first box is PPP adapter. (If the first entry is your network adapter, you see your address on the local area network). If your IP address is 0.0.0.0, it means you're not currently connected to the Internet and must first dial your Internet Service Provider.


Specify Host Name or IP Address
Please enter the host name or IP address of the machine to connect to.
153.36.21.90
Note: Connecting across the Internet can take several minutes.
OK
Cancel

To join a race over the Internet, you must provide the host computer's IP address in this dialog box.

Once you have your IP address, share it with the people you'd like to race. But remember to share the information by email, Internet telephony, chat program, or by calling them on a separate phone line. If you disconnect your Internet service to call them, you'll probably have a different IP address next time you connect to the Internet!

Hosting a Race on the Internet

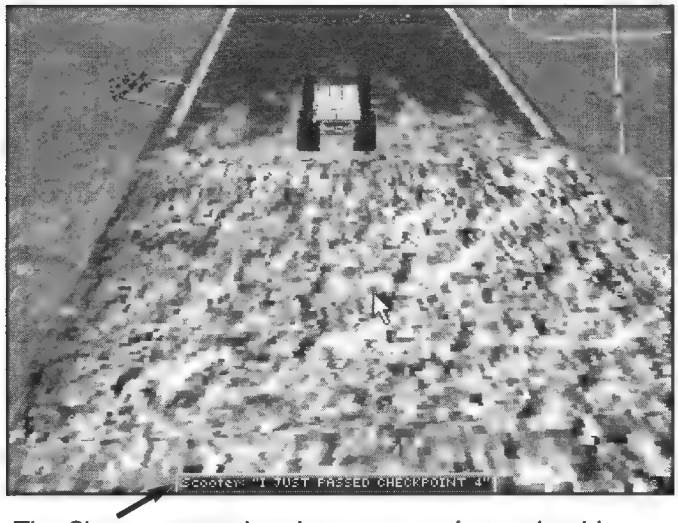
Follow the steps to start a multiplayer game and select Internet TCP/IP Connection from the list under Select a Connection Type. Press OK. A "waiting for players to start game" message appears in the interim. Note that it may take several minutes for the other players to be hooked up when you're setting up an Internet game.

Joining a Race Via the Internet

Before you can join an Internet multiplayer game, you must contact your host to find out his or her IP number. Once the number's in hand, you're ready to get started. Follow the steps for starting a multiplayer game, and when the first Join a Multiplayer Game window comes up, select Internet TCP/IP Connection under the Select a Connection list. Then enter the IP address of the host computer in the Specify Host Name or IP dialog box and press OK.

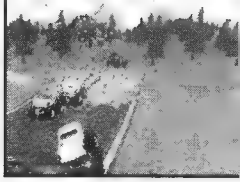
Chatting During Races

Another feature of the multiplayer sessions is Chat. Just as the drivers of real monster trucks could exchange messages during a race via their CB radios, you can send messages to the other players with whom you race. You can send messages that can be read by all drivers, or to individual players only. To send a message you type it in a small window (the Chat Message window) that pops up on your screen. Likewise, the message's recipient(s) will read the message in another window (the Incoming Chat window). Don't forget that the race isn't going to stop while you type a message. If you can't type as you drive, don't chat with your fellow players!



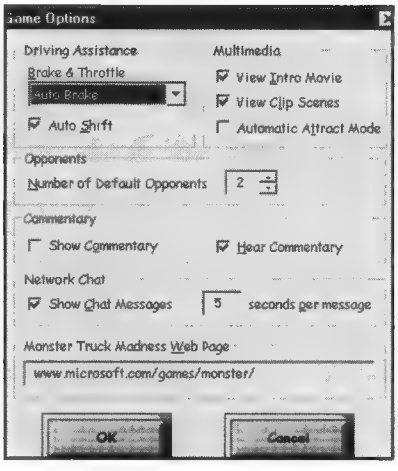
The Chat message box lets you stay in touch with your fellow players during a race. During the multiplayer game, pressing C on the keyboard brings up the message box. Type in your comment and press Return. Your message appears here.

You must also realize that keyboard commands are disabled while you're typing a message. If you are wondering why Monster Truck Madness doesn't use a real chat feature that would let players exchange messages through their microphones and speakers, the answer is bandwidth. A modem connection is just barely adequate for transferring game data between computers, let alone simultaneous voice data.

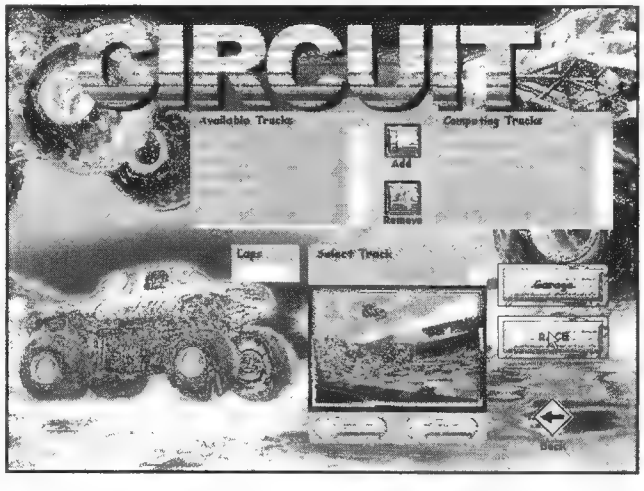


Send Messages: To exchange messages with other players, follow these steps:

1. Press T to bring up the Chat Message box after a race begun.
2. Unless you choose otherwise, everything you type appears on every player's screen. To select a driver's name and send a private message, use the Up and Down arrow keys to select the name of the player you wish to receive your message.
3. Begin typing the message. You can make corrections with the Backspace key only. When you're ready, press the Enter key to send the message. It's displayed in the Incoming Message box of the destination computer.
4. The message remains on the recipient's computer for a user-specified number of seconds (the default amount is five seconds). The Incoming Message box holds only a single message, but you can read up to the 20 of your most recent messages by pressing the Comma (,) key to



Use the Network Chat feature in the Game Options box to control the appearance of on-screen messages.



Add computer-controlled competitors to keep things interesting. This circuit race has four participants. The first two are controlled by human players, the last two by computer.

see the previous message and the Period (.) key to see the next message.

5. To change the five-second default, select the Game command under the Options menu. A Game Options dialog box appears which includes a slot for Network Chat. You can set the number of seconds all messages remain visible on the screen, or disable messages altogether if you wish to concentrate in your driving.

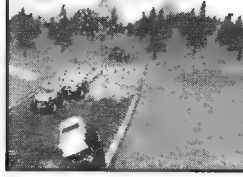
Add More Trucks to a Race

If you're hosting a multiplayer session of Monster Truck Madness and there aren't enough human drivers in the game, you can have the computer add extra trucks. The computer-generated competitors are controlled by the local (host) computer.

Only the host can add computer-controlled trucks to a race. Here's how it's done: Wait until the Rally or Circuit dialog box appears after you've determined the type of race to be run. Select the computer competitors from the Available Trucks list by double-clicking on a truck, or by highlighting the name and pressing the Add button.

If you change your mind about a truck, double-click the name on the Competing Trucks list or highlight the name and press the Remove button.

The multiplayer sessions of Monster Truck Madness are a bit different than the sessions you race against the computer. For one thing, you're not alone and you can't interrupt the game as you race. You can't stop the game to consult the in-game manual or to take a break. If a player pauses, quits or otherwise disconnects his or her computer while a race is in progress, he or she is out of the race. The remaining players, however, won't even notice it as the computer takes over and steers the player's truck for the rest of the game. Of course, if the host quits in the middle of a race, the race ends for all participants.



The Monster Truck Web Stop

Because most game players are also avid Internet surfers, Microsoft has included a hot button on the Main Menu that takes you to a site designed exclusively for fans. This is *the* place for the latest information about the game, including tips, hints, a Hall of Fame for drivers, and much more. If you're on the Internet pay it a visit to this site every now and then—it's only a mouse-click away.

This Monster Truck Madness web site is your ultimate resource for the latest news and gaming. Visit http://www.microsoft.com/games/monster/ to tour the web site.

Chapter Nine

Hardware and Peripherals

You may be ready to play Microsoft Monster Truck Madness as soon as you get it home, but you need to make sure your computer is ready before you jump behind the wheel. A few minutes to optimize your system and find the right joystick makes the final driving experience even better.

Games can be hard on a computer—after all, word-processing software may tax your system's memory (RAM) and central-processing unit (CPU), but it doesn't require a sound card to produce audio effects and music, real-time rendering and 3D animation, support for joysticks and game pads, or synchronization of two or more computers for multiplayer games. It's easy to see why so many users experience problems getting their games to run properly.

Fortunately, the Windows 95 operating system eliminates many of the problems previously experienced by gamers. One of the biggest sticking points encountered in years past, for example, was getting things like the sound card and joystick to work correctly. With Windows 95, however, those troubles diminish. If you hear sound in Windows 95, you hear it in a Windows 95 game. And thanks to the Windows 95's Add New Hardware Wizard, conflicts that might arise when two peripherals (such as a joystick and sound card) try to use the same system resources are more easily spotted and corrected. But just because a game is running under Windows 95 doesn't mean it's running at its very best. Take a look at these steps to ensure Monster Truck Madness runs as smoothly as possible. As a bonus, the same steps improve all your Windows 95 applications, too.

System Requirements: Minimum Versus Recommended

The minimum system requirements listed on the game box are usually just that: the bare minimum in processing speed, RAM, CD-ROM performance, and video-card specifications needed to get the game up and running. Some games—particularly those that don't use true 3D graphics and animation—run just fine on a system that meets that game's minimum system requirements.

But often, playing a game on a system that meets only the minimum requirements is not an extremely satisfying experience. That's why many game publishers, including Microsoft, list two sets of system requirements: minimum and recommended. When deciding whether or not a game will run well on your system, base your decision on the recommended requirements—their presence alone is an indication that you probably won't be thrilled with the performance you get running the game on a lesser system.

With that in mind, take a look at the various components listed in the system requirements, and see what steps you can take to make Monster Truck Madness run at peak performance—either through upgrading individual components or by tweaking the many configuration options available in the game itself.

Central Processing Unit (CPU)

- Our Recommendation: 120MHz or faster

The CPU is best described as your computer's "brain." It's the a silicon chip inside your system that actually carries out the instructions in various programs; the faster the CPU, the faster an application runs. CPU speed isn't the sole determinant of how fast a program runs, but it's unquestionably the single most important factor.

CPU speed is measured in megahertz (MHz); to play Monster Truck Madness, you need at least a Pentium-based computer with a CPU speed of 75MHz. But the fact is that while the game certainly runs on a 75MHz Pentium, the system simply isn't powerful enough to show the game in its best light—the animation will be choppy, the truck won't handle as well, and load times will be longer.

Even with a 90MHz Pentium, you should probably play at the lowest graphics resolution (more on that later in this chapter), and perhaps even turn off some of the graphic extras such as smoke or textured sky. But at least with a 90MHz Pentium you can play the game and see it run reasonably well. Of course, if you have a 120 MHz, 133MHz, or 166MHz Pentium, the game runs even better.

If you do have a 75MHz Pentium and have been running Windows 95 applications, though, you've probably already concluded that it might be time to upgrade to a faster CPU. Fortunately, the arrival of Intel's Pentium Pro chip has caused prices on all Pentium chips to drop, especially Pentium Overdrive Processors. The Overdrive Pent-125, for example, can upgrade a 75MHz Pentium system to 125MHz at a current cost of between $270 and $300. That seems like a large chunk of change, and you should keep in mind that such an upgraded system won't perform as well as one that shipped with a 125MHz processor (the motherboard on a 75 MHz Pentium wasn't designed to go that fast), but it's definitely less expensive than buying a brand new system.

There's one other thing to keep in mind: faster processors are always just around the corner. If you can get by on your 75MHz until the arrival of 200 MHz Pentiums (not Pentium Pros, whose architecture provides advantages mainly for PCs used as servers or workstations) prices on "slower" chips, like the 125MHz will drop even more.

Memory (RAM)

- Minimum: 8 MB
- Our Recommendation: 16 MB

Another crucial component affecting how well a given program runs is the amount of Random Access Memory (RAM) installed in your machine. When you launch a program, it's loaded into the available RAM, allowing the CPU to access the data quickly it needs for the program to run.

The more RAM you have, the more data that can be stored there—and because the CPU can retrieve data from RAM much faster than from the hard drive or from a CD-ROM, system performance almost always improves as you increase the amount of RAM. There's a point of diminishing returns, of course—you may not notice a huge difference in jumping from 16 MB to 32 MB, for instance, unless your PC is a server on a local area network—but the general rule for RAM is the more the merrier.

Monster Truck Madness requires a minimum 8 MB of RAM, but you can rest assured that you'll be doing a lot of waiting if you try to play on such a system, especially if the processor speed is 90 MHz or lower. We recommend 16 MB of RAM.

But if you do have only 8 MB RAM, don't despair. Adding more RAM to your system is one of the cheapest, simplest upgrades you can make. RAM prices have been at an all-time low, with 4 MB SIMMs (Single In-line Memory Modules) costing as little as $35, and 8 MB SIMMs running between $60 and $90.

Prices vary depending upon location, retailer, and whether the RAM is parity or non-parity—check your owner's manual to find out what type of RAM you need. Remember: increasing the amount of RAM speeds up everything, from word processors and graphic-arts programs to spreadsheets and databases.

The bottom line? If you have only 8 MB of RAM, you need to upgrade. Period. And with prices like these, now's the time to buy.

CD-ROM Drive

- Our Recommendation: Quad-speed (4X)

This one's a no-brainer: The minimum is a quad-speed CD-ROM, and we see no reason for anything faster—at least for now. Sure, 6X and 8X CD-ROM drives transfer data into RAM faster than a 4X drive, but the data that's being pulled from the Monster Truck Madness CD-ROM drive is mainly video clips—and since they've been designed to play smoothly on a 4X drive, having a 6X or 8X isn't going to make that much of a difference. About the only improvement comes during installation. The faster data transfer rate of a 6X or 8X CD-ROM drive means it doesn't take as long to install files on your hard drive as it would with a 4X drive.

But should you be thinking about upgrading to a faster CD-ROM drive, don't let us stop you. With programs that run mainly off the CD-ROM drive, you might notice a big improvement in performance. But as far as Monster Truck Madness and many other games and applications are concerned, a quad-speed CD-ROM should be sufficient.

Video Card

- Minimum: Local-Bus or PCI SVGA video
- Our Recommendation: 3D Accelerated video card with full support for DirectX 2.0

The type of video card in your system can have a major impact on how well Monster Truck Madness runs. Three factors play a role in the speed of your video card: the type of memory it has, the amount of memory it has, and whether or not it's a 3D accelerated video card that fully supports DirectX 2.0.

Video cards have two types of memory: VRAM (Video Random Access Memory) and DRAM (Dynamic Random Access Memory). DRAM is the same type of memory used by your system's motherboard, while VRAM is a special kind of memory designed specifically for video

cards. VRAM is faster than DRAM, but the difference between the two is so small that you probably wouldn't notice any change in game play if you replaced a DRAM-based card with one using VRAM. What's more, a card designed to use DRAM can't be switched to VRAM, so the only way to switch from DRAM to VRAM is to buy a new video card.

With the minimum video card—a local-bus or PCI SVGA card with 1 MB of RAM—you can play Monster Truck Madness in two video modes, 320 x 200 and 320 x 400, and still expect reasonably good performance (assuming your processor and RAM are adequate, of course). To run the game in 640 x 480, you need a video card that has a Windows 95 Direct Draw driver; luckily, the game ships with Direct Draw drivers for the vast majority of video cards on the market. But when running Monster Truck Madness in 640 x 480 with the minimum video-card specification—even with graphic details set at minimum—at certain times the game play slows to a crawl, especially when too many trucks are on screen at once.

So what to do? The first step is to increase the amount of memory on the video card. Most video cards can be upgraded, and if you have only 1 MB of memory on your video card, consider upgrading to 2 MB either by adding more memory or buying a new video card. Going from 2 MB to 4 MB offers even greater improvements in graphics performance. Exactly how much improvement you get from increasing the amount of memory on your video card depends to some degree on your system's other components.

The last factor affecting video-card performance in Monster Truck Madness is whether or not it's a 3D accelerated card that fully supports DirectX 2.0—Direct3D in particular. The basic idea behind 3D accelerated video cards is that they have special chips designed to handle the processing of 3D images, relieving the CPU of that burden. Besides providing a better frame rate, 3D accelerator video cards make the quality of the graphics run faster and smoother (You must run the game in 640 x 480 to take advantage of these Direct3D features, however).

Unfortunately, Direct3D is so new that as we go to press none of the 3D accelerated cards on the market have drivers that fully support it. But

ATI Technologies has almost finished writing a Windows 95 display driver with Direct3D support for its 3D Expression card, and owners of that card should be able to download the new drivers, when they're available, from ATI's World Wide Web site (http://www.atitech.ca).

With a dozen or more 3D accelerator cards currently on the market, and more on the way, how do you know which one to buy? As is so often the case with computer hardware, the answer isn't simple or straightforward.

When shopping for a 3D accelerated video card, the manufacturer of the actual chipset on the video card is probably more important than the manufacturer of the card. Two chipsets that definitely have full support for Direct3D by the time you read this are the Voodoo Graphics chipset, manufactured by a relatively new company called 3Dfx Interactive, Inc., and the Rendition Verité chipset from Rendition, Inc. 3Dfx Interactive has already signed agreements with Orchid Technology (a major manufacturer of video cards) and FMI Graphics Products to use the Voodoo Graphics chipset on its 3D accelerated video cards (Orchid's 3D card is called "Righteous 3D") while the Rendition Verité has been chosen by Creative Labs as the chipset to be used in the PCI version of the 3D Blaster, a local-bus 3D accelerated video card.

We want to make it clear, however, that by naming these specific chipsets we are in no way endorsing them over any of the other chipsets on the market. We mention them only because we know they will indeed work with Monster Truck Madness as we go to press. Naturally, other chipsets will have full support for Direct3D, so before you make a purchase, you should do some research and learn how the various cards stack up in terms of performance and price.

For a fairly complete list of 3D accelerator chipsets and video cards, check out the PC 3D Graphics Accelerators FAQ on the World Wide Web at http://www.cs.columbia.edu/~bm/3dcards/3d-cards1.html#Index. For the latest announcements from manufacturers of 3D accelerator cards and software companies that support them, point your Web browser to http://www.dimension3d.com.

Operating System

You must have Microsoft Windows 95 to run Monster Truck Madness. As we go to press, there are no plans for versions that run on Macintosh computers.

Sound Cards and Speakers

- Minimum: Windows 95 compatible sound card and speakers or headphones
- Our Recommendation: A 16-bit Windows 95 compatible sound card with DirectSound drives, and speakers or headphones.

The main thing to keep in mind with sound cards is that you need a 16-bit sound card to hear stereo. Fortunately, nearly every computer that's has at least a 75 MHz processor and 8 MB of RAM probably came with a 16-bit sound card. While a 32-bit sound card obviously has the potential for better sound reproduction, it's noticeable only when a game or program has 32-bit music or sound effects—a relatively rare occurrence, at least at this point in time.

It also helps if your sound-card manufacturer has created DirectSound drivers. DirectSound allows programmers to access advanced features of a sound card directly instead of trying emulate such features in the program itself—and that in turn means the game runs slightly faster, since the sound card rather than the CPU is handling a share of the "workload."

There are all sorts of speakers on the market; the best way to go about choosing a set is to determine how much money you have to spend, then use the ears Mother Nature gave you to decide which ones sound best to you. If possible, spring for a speaker system that includes a subwoofer—such systems are space savers because the subwoofer can be placed anywhere on the floor in a room, and its presence means the speakers that sit on your desk can be smaller since a large speaker cone isn't needed to reproduce bass. When test-

shopping for speakers, though, remember to position them in a way similar to how they'll be positioned on your desk: speaker placement can make a huge difference in how music and audio effects sound.

If you already have a set of speakers but aren't satisfied with the sound, you might want to look into any number of products using Spatializer 3D Audio technology, which uses a special chip to create surround sound with only two speakers. The Spatializer HTMS-2510, which can be used with your computer, stereo, or television, costs $249 direct from Spatializer Audio Laboratories. Other products which use Spatializer 3D Audio technology include Compaq Presario 5500 and 9500 computers; Labtec (LCS-3210, LCS-1224, and LCS-2612 amplified computer speakers, and the LCS-9210 Imager 3-D Audio System); sound cards from AdLib Multimedia, Everex, Multiwave Innovation, and Orchid Technology; and, perhaps most interesting of all, the Winner 3D Audio Stick, a four-button joystick with a hat switch that has a built-in Spatializer 3D Audio chip. Hook the 15-pin adapter to the joystick port and stereo plug into the sound card, and the signals from your sound card are processed through the 3D Audio chip. It retails for around $49.

The Winner 3D Audio Stick has a built-in audio chip that turns regular stereo output from two speakers into surround sound. It has a volume control on its base in addition to a trigger, three fire buttons, and a hat switch.

NuReality is another company producing 3D audio peripherals; its products are based on SRS 3D sound technology. Their lowest-priced product, the Vivid 3D ($59.95), works with both computer and video-game systems, while the Vivid 3D Proex ($109.95) is been designed for multimedia computers. And if you're considering new speakers instead of a peripheral to improve your old ones, NuReality also makes Vivid 3D speakers ($179.95).

Designed to create surround sound on both multimedia computers and video-game systems, the Vivid 3D carries an attractive sticker price of $59.95.

Both the Spatializer and NuReality technologies have a noticeable effect on sound playback, but as when buying any audio equipment, the true test is how good they sound to you. Be sure to give any new speakers a thorough test run before laying down your hard-earned cash.

Hard-Drive Space

- Minimum: 20 MB
- Our Recommendation: 90MB

Just a few short years ago, computer gamers would have thrown back their heads and laughed at the notion of a game using 90 MB of hard-drive space, but the dramatic drop in hard-drive prices has led to bigger and bigger drives. In fact, a 1.6 gigabyte hard drive has been pretty much standard fare for at least a year.

Still, 90 MB is a pretty sizable amount of hard-drive real estate. But the bottom line is that regardless of the type of program you're installing, it always pays to put as much of it as possible on the hard drive. That's because the data transfer rate of a hard drive is still faster than a CD-ROM, which is where the CPU retrieves a lot of data if you choose for the minimum 20 MB installation. And if you're so low on hard-drive space that 50 MB makes a big difference to you, it's time to either delete some unused games and programs or think about either buying a new hard drive or adding a second hard drive to your system.

Modem

- Minimum: 14.4kbps
- Our Recommendation: 28.8kbps

But if you own a 14.4kbps modem, you can take solace in the fact that you're not upgrading to 28.8kbps just to play Monster Truck Madness; you're upgrading because your old modem is essentially obsolete—at least as far as Internet and online access is concerned. Luckily, a 28.8 kbps modem costs only around $120 or so, and the difference it makes in your online experience is well worth the money. (For a complete description on game play over the Internet, please see Chapter Eight: Racing Multiple Opponents.)

Graphics Settings and Game Play

As the old saying goes, there's more than one way to skin a cat—and in Monster Truck Madness, there are other ways to improve game performance besides upgrading your CPU, RAM, or video card. To optimize your system, select Options from the Monster Truck Madness menu bar, then choose Graphics.

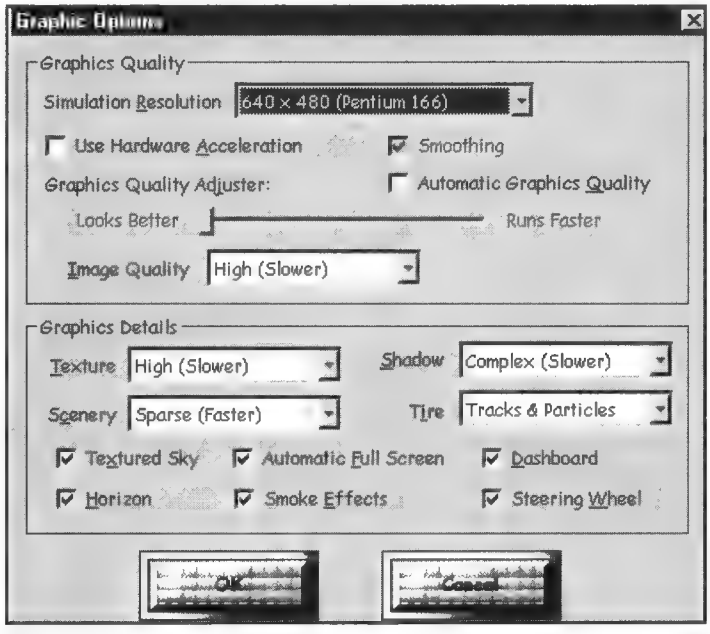
Graphics Options

The dialog box under Graphics enables you to fine-tune everything from resolution to texture detail so you can create the smoothest-running Monster Truck Madness possible. The obvious goal when adjusting these is to find the best balance between visual quality and satisfying game play. To do that, it helps to know which settings have the biggest impact on game performance. We'll start with the one that affects performance the most, and work our way down from there.

Game Resolution (640 x 480, 320 x 400, and 320 x 200)

Of all the Graphics settings, the Game Resolution you choose affects performance the most drastically. If all other setting are at their

minimum, switching from a Game Resolution of 640 x 480 (Pentium 166) to 320 x 200 (Pentium 60) results in roughly a doubling of the frames-per-second rate. If the other settings are at their highest level, the boost is even greater. The default setting, 320 x 400 (Pentium 100) Game Resolution, results in about a 50 percent increase in performance over 640 x 480.



Adjust options in the Graphics dialog box until Monster Truck Madness plays best on your system.

But this setting also most drastically affects the game's appearance, especially on a 15" or 17" monitor. The good news is that you can always try running the game in the 320 x 400 resolution before dropping all the way down to 320 x 200, and even at 320 x 200, Monster Truck Madness' graphics are very good.

But before you lower the Game Resolution try tweaking the other graphics settings, beginning with Image Quality, located in the middle of the dialog box.

Image Quality (Low, Normal, High)

If Monster Truck Madness isn't running well on your system, this should be the very first setting to adjust. Depending on fast the game is running, switching from High (Slower) to Low (Faster) Image Quality adds between three and five frames per second to the frame rate—a

substantial improvement—and the change in graphics quality isn't very great at all.

Texture Detail (Low, Normal, High)

Because Texture Detail refers to the amount of textures loaded into memory, if you have 12 MB of RAM or less, you should set this to Low. If you don't, the program must load the textures from the hard drive or CD-ROM, slowing down game play. If you have 16 MB of RAM or more, definitely leave this option set to High.

Shadow Detail (None, Normal, Complex)

With Shadow Detail set to Complex, you should see fairly accurate shadows cast on the ground by flying trucks; on Normal, dark patches are used instead of realistic shadows, and on None there are no shadows at all.

Selecting Normal or None may increase the frame rate by one or two frames per second, but it's not the sort of improvement that catches your eye. Still, if the game is running poorly, you might as well set this to None and see what happens.

Tire (None, Tracks Only, Tracks and Particles)

As much fun as it may be to kick up some dirt as you take a corner on two wheels, the Tracks and Particles setting can slow the game by one to three frames per second as opposed to having it set to None. Again, it's not a huge difference, but these things add up.

Scenery (Sparse, Normal, Complex)

You shouldn't be spending a lot of time looking at the scenery, so it shouldn't matter to you whether each blade of grass is visible or you just get pixelated chunks of color. Players running on lower-end systems—90MHz or less and with 8 MB of RAM—will probably want to leave the Scenery on Sparse, but only after seeing how the game runs with Scenery set on Complex.

Other Options

These selectable boxes have little influence on the overall speed or smoothness of a game, but you can also experiment with including or not including smoothing, textured sky, horizon, auto full screen, smoke effects, dashboard, and steering wheel (yes, we know it's a racing game, but you don't need the steering wheel). In addition the Graphics Quality Adjuster is a quick-fix slide bar that lets you set the graphics quality on high (Looks Better), low (Runs Faster), or somewhere in between.

Peripherals

Quite frankly, Monster Truck Madness doesn't play badly with just a keyboard. But driving fans want their toys, and the game supports a variety of other controllers that might make the game more fun—or at least more realistic. And if you want the game to have a true arcade feeling, you can't go wrong with a joystick or game pad.

Devoted driving fans might also consider buying a driving wheel. Not only does this steering-wheel peripheral round out the driving experience, but it also really enhances the realism of the game.

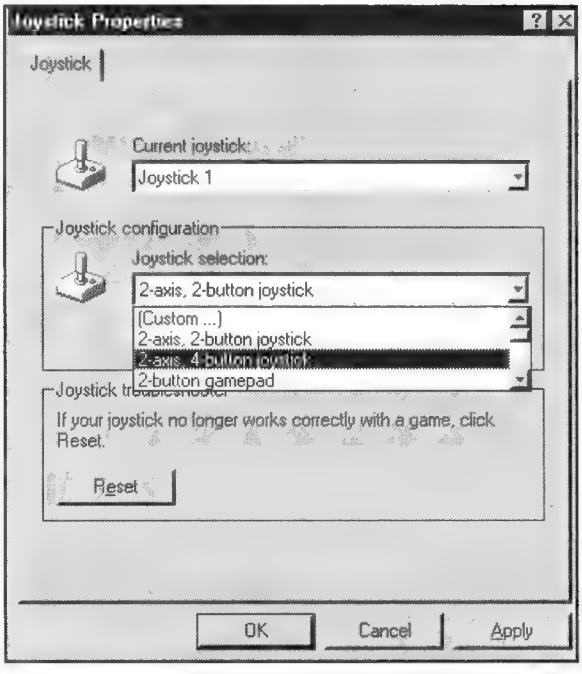
Purchasing a Game Controller

Before you buy a game controller, first determine the type of interface you prefer. For example, a game pad gives the game a video-game feel since that's the type of controller included with most video-game systems. A joystick makes the game feel more like a simulation.

Because of the control configuration it provides (see Chapter One: Playing the Game), we recommend a joystick or driving wheel for Monster Truck Madness, but it really is a matter of taste. The only thing that really matters is that you're comfortable with whatever controller you choose.

Controller Setup

Windows 95 users can change the configuration setting for each separate controller. To do this, you can access the Control menu under Options at the game's menu bar, or you can click on Start on the Windows 95 desktop, and select Settings, then Control Panels. Double-click on the Joystick icon. The joystick you wish to use needs to be listed as Joystick 1; select the appropriate model under Joystick Selection. If, for example, you're using the Microsoft Sidewinder 3D, select it in the menu. If it doesn't yet appear in the menu, you need to install the drivers for it from the disk that came with the joystick. To do that, insert the disk in your drive, open the start menu, select Run, and run the set-up program found on the disk.



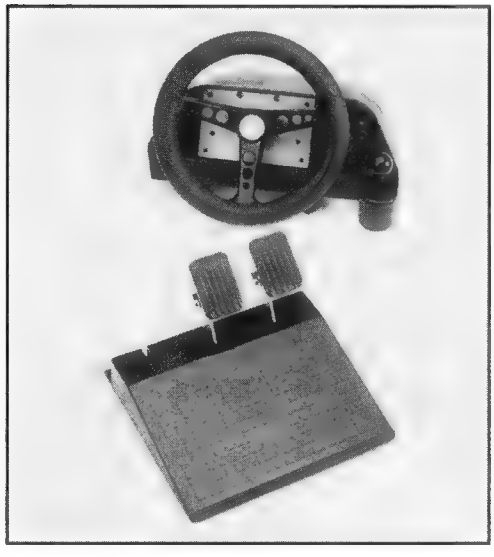
Set up your game controller from this Windows 95 menu.

If you're using a driving controller, select the 2-axis button configuration. To activate your controller, select Apply. If your controller isn't listed, you might not have installed the drivers so your computer recognizes it. Consult the controller's instruction manual for more information. Since the game default is keyboard controls, the first time you play Monster Truck Madness you need to change the Primary Driving Control. Load Monster Truck Madness and select Options from the Main Menu bar. Choose Controls, then select the driving control you're using and click OK.

Monster Truck Madness has default button assignments for the Microsoft Sidewinder 3D Pro installed. But if you're not satisfied with them, you can change the button configurations.

Joysticks

Monster Truck Madness supports any joystick, although we suggest you use a joystick with a hat switch because it enables you to change perspectives when using the Cockpit view. (Look out the left window by pulling the hat switch left; the right window by pulling the hat switch right; or the rear window by pulling the hat switch back.) You can also use it to move the external camera around the truck for a better view of the action. Push forward on the hat switch and your rear view mirror pops up in front of you. Microsoft's Sidewinder 3D Pro is perfectly suited for controlling Monster Truck Madness because of its unique design and button configuration. The joystick is also completely customizable, which means you can assign the individual buttons any way you like.



The Thrustmaster T2 Driving Controller gives you the most realistic driving experience of any peripheral. And if you're not satisfied with the default button assignments, customize them so they're more to your liking.

Game Pads

Monster Truck Madness also supports game pads. Unfortunately, though, you can customize the game pad only partially because the number of controls is more limited. That reason alone makes it difficult to recommend a game pad unless you just can't play a game without one glued to your hand. Default button assignments are installed in Monster Truck Racing, but you can easily change the configuration using the Custom selection box in Controls.

Driving Wheels or Race-Car Controllers

For the ultimate racing experience, we recommend purchasing a driving wheel. Several wheels are available on the market; we found the Thrustmaster Formula T2 entertaining, and it's fully supported by Monster Truck Madness.

Chapter Ten

Monster Truck Almanac

America's love affair with off-road sports began in World War II, when tens of thousands of GIs first took control of four-wheel drive behind the wheel of a jeep. Sure, jeeps were practical and lifesaving, but they were also fun—both nimble and rugged, they could ford creeks, climb ditches, and tear through mud puddles.

After the war, ex-servicemen who lived in rural areas bought surplus jeeps to provide reliable transportation. With a typical fondness for finding entertainment with utilitarian equipment, folks across the U.S. were soon holding popular off-road races. Hill climbs and load-pulling competitions became equally popular events.

By the early 1970s, four-wheel-drive pickup trucks had largely replaced war-surplus jeeps as the nation's favorite workhorse vehicles. One early and enthusiastic 4x4 owner was Bob Chandler of Hazelwood, MO. A natural-born mechanic, Chandler taught himself how to repair his 1974 blue Ford F-250 truck, and before long other truck owners were coming to him for advice, since no parts or repair shops for four-wheel-drive vehicles were available in the Midwest at that time.

Sensing a business opportunity, Chandler opened his own shop, called Midwest 4WD. At first, Chandler couldn't afford conventional advertising, so he used his truck—appropriately decorated and loaded with accessories available at his store—as a calling card, traveling to "truck-ins" throughout the St. Louis area.

During an Alaskan vacation, as an experiment, Chandler fitted his truck with 48-inch tires originally designed for Arctic terrain. He found that not only did the oversized tires increase his vehicle's off-road

Bob Chandler

performance, but they also always drew a large and enthusiastic crowd. Chandler's first paid appearance, at a car show held in Denver, was in 1979.

Two years later, he mounted 66-inch tires on his truck (which would become the standard for monster trucks) and first began crushing junk cars with his truck. The fans loved it, and car-crushing soon became the most popular event at monster truck rallies. The truck was named Bigfoot after Chandler himself. His mechanic had given him the nickname because his foot was always on the accelerator during a race. It seemed only natural for Chandler's nickname to carry over to his truck. And when Chandler painted the Bigfoot name on his driver's-side door, a legend was born.

These days, of course, monster trucks are a wildly popular attraction by themselves, not just a curious addition to more conventional off-road sporting events. The original Bigfoot has spawned more than a dozen descendants (including Bigfoot 5, whose tires measure a gargantuan ten feet), all of which Chandler paints the same blue of his original pickup truck. Twenty years after Bob Chandler began using his Ford to advertise his shop, monster truck rallies draw an estimated 9 or 10 million fans every year.

The PC Press caught up with Chandler at the headquarters of the Monster Truck Racing Association in Hazelwood, where he took some time to reflect on the nature (and the future) of the sport he founded.

PC Press: You've been involved in this sport since the beginning. Indeed, you founded the sport. What changes do you see taking place now?

Chandler: The biggest change took place about four years ago, when we started side-by-side racing events. We're hoping to sort of "legitimize" monster truck racing and gain acceptance for it as another so-called "motor sport," just like stock-car racing and Formula 1 racing. It's not easy to make that breakthrough because we're being compared to sports that have been recognized for 30 or 40 years. NASCAR doesn't recognize us yet, for instance.

PC Press: Well, there was a time when stock-car racing wasn't recognized as a legitimate "motor sport," either.

Chandler: Exactly. And we're still evolving, still coming along, but I'm confident that we will gain that kind of acceptance. It just takes time; that's all.

PC Press: What signs of progress do you see right now?

Chandler: The sign we would most like to see is a decent monetary purse. (He laughs.) At the moment, we race all year long, and the total purse is $60,000. That may sound good, but our season lasts seven months, basically, and a winning driver could take home $15,000 for his efforts. But the engine alone in one of those trucks costs $45,000, and it generally has to be worked on after every race. Therefore, we have to be somewhat sponsor-oriented at this stage. Many of our races are televised, and we race for our sponsors, hoping that greater exposure means greater support.

PC Press: How many major corporations are currently sponsors?

Chandler: Ford has been involved the longest, and Dodge trucks moved into the field about three years ago. Firestone is heavily involved—after

all, the tires are what most people notice first about a monster truck. But much of our support comes from smaller companies, firms that make truck accessories such as bed-liners. At the moment, there are no foreign companies involved because you need a big, full-bodied truck to compete, and the smaller import models just don't work.

PC Press: Do you still enjoy the sport as much as you did in the beginning?

Chandler: Yes! It still amazes me. I started out with this ordinary pickup truck with a big bulky engine in it, just doing little displays here and there. But I watch my trucks now, and they're going through a 250-foot track in 4.1 seconds in a 10,000-pound vehicle, and it's still utterly amazing to me. I predicted this kind of performance some years ago, and I was told that it wasn't possible. Well, it *is* possible, and we're doing it.

PC Press: What's the most crowd-pleasing event? Is it still car-crushing?

Chandler: Well, for the last seven or eight years I've been trying to get away from car-crushing. For a while, we didn't have our trucks jumping over cars at all—we just had a ramp and the dirt floor of the arena. But people want to see those junker cars on the track, whether you're crushing them or jumping over them. And people love it when something unexpected happens, when a truck rolls over. Like it or not, there's entertainment value in the spectacle of destruction. So, yes, I guess the car-crushing is still the biggest crowd-pleaser.

PC Press: At the same time, your sport has an enviable safety record.

Chandler: We've reached the point where our trucks are very safe. You can roll them end over end or side to side, and the driver's still safe inside his protective cage. Nobody in the sport cuts corners when it comes to safety.

PC Press: How important is computer design in today's monster trucks? When you started, 20 years ago, it must have been very much a seat-of-the-pants proposition.

***Chandler*:** It was indeed. And for a while, in the late eighties, we did make extensive use of computers—I used the AUTOCAD program to design Bigfoot 8, which was the first monster truck to utilize a tubular frame and an integrated roll cage. But today, the basic design is pretty much standardized. We all use the same cage, the same frame, and pretty much the same suspension. Not that changes can't still be made and these things perfected further. But nowadays the changes are incremental rather than large-scale.

The Bigfoot team has concentrated on eliminating the weak links that used to plague the vehicles. Transmissions, for instance, used to break down all the time, but this past year we've had only one breakdown in that system.

PC Press: Is it a question of how you mount the transmissions or of the materials used in construction?

***Chandler*:** The materials. Potentially, every element of a transmission is a weak link—I can't believe transmissions take the kind of punishment they do. Improvements in materials have also been important in the brakes. And we work closely with Ford: when we find something we think can be improved, we inform them, and when they come up with a new part or a new compound, they share it with us. It's a sensible arrangement. If a piece of equipment can stand up to the treatment we give it, it can certainly be expected to perform well in the family pickup truck!

PC Press: How large do you estimate the average audience is?

***Chandler*:** Our events average about 30,000 people, although we've had certain individual shows that attracted 120,000, and, of course, there are a lot of mom-and-pop venues that are relatively small. But on the whole, our average attendance is about 30,000, which is great.

PC Press: Why is it that these shows strike such an enthusiastic chord in audiences? Is it because Americans have always loved big machinery?

***Chandler*:** I wish I knew the precise answer—I'd bottle it and sell it! Our studies have shown that a lot of the audience growth comes from

kids who bring their parents, and then the parents end up having a whale of a time, too. That's our core audience—kids and parents. We try to maintain a very family-oriented image for the Bigfoot enterprises. We've had lots of opportunities, for instance, to have pictures published of our trucks being posed with girls in bikinis, but we've shied away from that. We don't need it. The truck is its own entity, and we want to keep it that way.

PC Press: This seems to be a quintessentially U.S. kind of attraction. How does it go over in foreign countries?

***Chandler*:** Surprisingly well. We've had shows in 15 countries to date. England was surprisingly good, although the crowds weren't as wild as they can be here. The same thing's true in Australia. Japan wasn't quite as good as I thought it would be, perhaps because advertising venues are much more limited there.

There's a good possibility that we're going to take a couple of trucks over to Saudi Arabia later on this year. That should prove very interesting. For one thing, the trucks perform and handle differently on sand than on dirt. We'll probably have to wet the sand and roll it before each show. And we'll have to use different tires because you need a bigger "foot" to get traction on sand—more surface area and a lot less air pressure. For another thing, there's a sultan over there who's going to put up $1 million dollars for a purse, and that is very attractive!

PC Press: Exactly how many monster trucks are there in the United States?

***Chandler*:** Somewhere between four or five hundred. Outside this country, the numbers are small—we've sold tires and parts to some guys in England and someone in South Africa, and several people in Australia. But the bulk of drivers are found right where the sport began, in the Midwest.

PC Press: Is the original Bigfoot still running?

***Chandler*:** Oh, yes. Mostly, it sits in our showroom, but for special events—say two or three times a year—it still performs. Of course, by

now, it doesn't have a single piece of its original body or frame. The frame got bent in the first movie we were ever in (*Take This Job and Shove It*, 1979), so that was the first major element that had to be replaced.

Some years ago, we were contacted by the Henry Ford Museum about donating Bigfoot as part of its collection, but the museum couldn't guarantee when or even *if* it would be a permanent exhibit, so I declined. I have too much blood, sweat, and dreams invested in that old truck to give it up under those conditions.

PC Press: It's been a pleasure talking to you. Thanks for sharing your insights.

Chapter Eleven

A Day in the Life...

Eric Meagher began his motor-sports career as a mud-track racer, for which he earned a wall of trophies and awards. But along the way, he fell in love with monster trucks.

For the past five years, Meagher has been associated with Bob Chandler's Team Bigfoot. He currently drives Bigfoot 15, which debuted in Las Vegas in November, 1994. Bigfoot 15 is a dedicated race truck with a tubular chassis, high-tech suspension, and more than 1,000 horsepower.

Eric Meagher

PC Press: How would you describe your job? Driving monster trucks has to be a unique occupation.

Meagher: It's certainly different from any other job in motor sports...not in every detail, of course, but in a lot of ways. My job entails a lot more than just driving the truck. I have to be both driver and mechanic, and, as fine a piece of machinery as my truck is, it still takes quite a beating. Another part of the job entails transporting the truck to and from every event from our home base here near St. Louis.

PC Press: Just how big a chore is that?

Meagher: Well, we try to make it look easy. When people see us unpacking or packing the truck after a show, they're always interested in watching. We've got it down to a fine routine now. Myself and one other person can either assemble the truck or break it down in 20-25 minutes.

The hardest part, by far, is the tires. It's not only the size, but it's also the weight. Each tire weighs more than 700 pounds. Obviously, two guys working alone could never manhandle those tires onto the truck, so we use a set of rollers that do most of the lifting and moving. Then we anchor the lug bolts by hand.

PC Press: What size trailer do you use to transport the truck?

***Meagher*:** Most of our trailers are 48-foot drop-trailers, meaning that the floor of the trailer bed can be moved down close to the ground. And they're 102 inches wide. Now, you really need to have seen this to visualize it, but a lot of people simply don't believe we can fit the entire truck—and all its tools and spare parts—into a trailer of that size.

Actually, we not only can fit the whole truck into that space, but we also have enough space left over for our on-the-road living quarters. It's really quite amazing to people when we open the doors and show them how we do it. The truck is so massive when it's assembled.

PC Press: Since the monster truck driving fraternity includes only 400-500 drivers, you must know a good percentage of them. Tell us how is it that one becomes interested enough in this sport to make a career of it?

***Meagher*:** Well, it's still such a relatively new sport that it hasn't developed a generational, father-to-son following, although we're getting

closer and closer to that. But speaking for myself and for a number of other drivers I know, I had no idea, no preconceived notion at all, that this is what I would want to do! I came into it from another motor sport—four-wheel drive mud-racing—where I had some exposure to monster trucks before I actually got the notion to drive them.

Other drivers seem to be divided into two camps: those who started out building their own personal monster trucks and ended up becoming owner/drivers, and those who started out working on the mechanics' team for another driver. This is still very much a hands-on sport, and just about all the drivers are also men who love engines and enjoy tinkering with them. There may come a time in the future when we have a category of "just drivers," but for now, most guys are mechanics first and drivers later.

PC Press: That seems a logical progression. These are still very much one-of-a-kind vehicles, aren't they?

***Meagher*:** Exactly so. Maybe even more so today than in the past because of the advancements in technology. There is an industry-wide set of standards, but those are safety standards, not design or mechanical criteria. When you get under the hood of the trucks themselves, they're as different as the personalities of the men who build and drive them.

PC Press: The safety record for this sport is really outstanding. Is that a result of those standards?

***Meagher*:** Yes, it is. The engines, transmissions, suspensions, paint jobs—all these elements can vary widely from truck to truck. But the safety standards are ironclad and form a two-inch-thick manual that everyone refers to. Every driver has a steel cage, a five-point harness, two fire extinguishers, and so on.

If you sat down at a show, however, and looked at eight different trucks in a row, I guarantee they would be unique vehicles in every respect except their safety equipment. And that's really one of the most appealing aspects of the sport. These trucks take on their own personalities.

PC Press: Does every driver have his—or her, since there are a few female drivers now—own style of competing?

***Meagher*:** Ironic that you should ask that! A while ago, I had my first chance in a long time to actually sit in the bleachers and watch a show, as opposed to participating in one. And I was surprised at how much variety there was in the drivers' styles. Some were more aggressive, some more elegant, some were methodical and businesslike, and some were obviously putting on the best show they could.

PC Press: Obviously, there's a lot of hard work behind the scenes. We were curious about what the ratio is between hours actually spent on the track and hours spent preparing for, or recovering from, an event.

***Meagher*:** For a typical show on a weekend, I would start preparing on Tuesday, which includes the driving time to the location of the show. Then after the actual show, there's more work to be done fixing any damage, replacing parts, and so on. Typically, each weekend of shows involves 80-85 hours of work, coming and going.

We pride ourselves on always presenting the cleanest, best-looking vehicle we can. We want it to sparkle when it comes out of the trailer. If that requires a 12-hour day instead of an 8-hour day, so be it.

PC Press: So there's always an element of showmanship?

***Meagher*:** Yes, of course. Even though we're all working for recognition of monster-truck racing as a legitimate motor sport, there wouldn't be any monster truck races if we didn't also put on a good show for the crowds. In its present state of development, I'd say the mixture of showmanship to pure sport is about 50-50. That's not to say that the shows are planned in advance the way wrestling matches are. I mean, it's still a motor sport, and anything can happen. That's part of its appeal. The audience doesn't know what's going to happen because *we* don't know what's going to happen. And the competitive events are just that—pure competition.

PC Press: The shows have something for everyone, then.

***Meagher*:** Everyone from 8 to 80! The kids love it because—let's face it—the trucks are really cool pieces of machinery! They're colorful and powerful, and they make a great racket. But there's that additional layer of enjoyment that comes from watching hard-fought competition.

PC Press: In other words, it's a classic all-American pastime.

***Meagher*:** Exactly. I don't think you can get any more all-American. And it all started right here in the Midwest.

PC Press: What do you think is the most dangerous event, and what is the most popular? And have those categories changed over the years?

***Meagher*:** That's a tough one. I think the most dangerous events are the high-speed races that are now being televised over the Nashville Network. I say that because of the speed factor. These are the fastest tracks we run, and we cover 250 feet in under five seconds in vehicles that weigh 10,000 lbs. If you roll a truck at that speed—well, you're asking a lot of the vehicle and the safety equipment. I've seen the sprint car roll as many as eight times way out front, and it only weighs 2,000 pounds. If you roll a five-ton truck with that kind of momentum, it's definitely dangerous.

But, again, those safety standards have proved their worth. We've had two rollovers like that so far this year, and the drivers walked away both times. That's one of the purposes of the MTRA [Monster Truck Racing Association]: it's a clearinghouse of ideas regarding what the problems are and what the best ways are of solving them. I can recall only two serious accidents in 20 years—accidents involving spectators. In both cases steps were immediately taken to make sure similar incidents didn't happen again.

PC Press: Well, that's certainly a better record than you'd find in, say, Formula 1 racing, where the cars sometimes become airborne and land in the spectators' laps.

***Meagher*:** Our insurance companies are happy, and we intend to keep it that way. Safety is an ongoing process for us, and we don't intend to become complacent. It's not only the right thing to do, but it's also a *necessary* thing to do if we want this sport to grow and find a higher level of acceptance.

PC Press: On a more technical subject: are the trucks still running on a mixture of gasoline and alcohol?

***Meagher*:** No. Nowadays, they're all fueled with alcohol. There are two fundamental reasons for that. One, alcohol produces more horsepower. And two, it burns cooler, which in turn reduces engine wear.

PC Press: If you could gaze into a crystal ball, do you think in ten years you'd see the sport gaining the kind of recognition that MTRA is working for?

***Meagher*:** Let me give you a two-part answer. First, in terms of where I'd like to see the sport in a decade's time: I think we'll have the public acceptance. What I'd like to see is a commensurate level of acceptance by corporate America...in other words, corporations getting behind us the way they have with older, more established motor sports. We've taken it a long, long way all by ourselves and have proven we can draw the crowds.

Second, I'd like to see a major change in the promoters' style. Right now, there's no sanctioning body, no oversight agency, and it's sometimes every man for himself out there. I hope that, within ten years, those who promote the shows and those who participate in them will be working more closely for the betterment of the sport as a whole.

PC Press: Thanks very much for sharing your thoughts with us.

Appendix One

Glossary

bump and roll: Bumping into another truck to cause it to roll or wreck. This is a tactic used by aggressive drivers through straightways when other competitors are trying to pass them.

loading: This happens when the weight of the truck is forced onto the shocks, increasing its forward momentum.

oversteer: If you haven't correctly configured your truck in the Garage, the rear end may be more prone to "fishtail" or spin out on turns. The rear wheels lose traction before the front wheels, and power is lost in the drivetrain because the wheels can't bite into the track surface. The problem can be corrected by choosing the correct tires and gear ratios before running each track.

Pitboard: This is the on-screen status board that displays your position, track time, and how far back or ahead you are compared to the other drivers.

pole position: The best starting position in a race, usually held by the lead qualifier.

power slide: This is the process of pushing your truck into and through a turn while the truck may still be coming out of skid. Basically, you use the momentum of a skid to throw your truck into a turn.

sideswipe: The impact when one driver turns sharply into the side of another. The process usually causes the second driver to spin out and wreck.

staging: The process before a drag race begins in which each driver must line up his or her vehicle with the starting line, so the countdown to the green can begin.

understeer: If your truck can't seem to turn sharply enough, it's "understeering" and may drift to the outside. Under-steering usually occurs when a driver has selected tires inappropriate for the course. To correct understeer problems, steer early into curves and make sure you choose the correct tires in the Garage before each race.

unloading: This happens when weight and momentum loaded into a vehicle's shocks (usually because of a jump or turn) suddenly releases, causing a brief but drastic shift in the truck's center of gravity, and making it easy to lose control of it.

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